NATION

'Docs, enggs engaging in anti-nat'l acts'

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

TCS to invest ₹ 18,000 cr in data centres

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

2nd Test: Shubman Gill set to undergo fitness test today

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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10 K'TAKA BILLS AWAIT PREZ'S NOD

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

At least 10 Bills passed by the Karnataka legislature are pending Presidential assent, including one granting four per cent reservation for Muslims in civil works contracts, official sources said on Thursday. No Bill is currently pending before the Karnataka Governor.

The development comes as the Supreme Court ruled that while courts cannot impose timelines on Governors or the President to clear Bills, they also cannot keep legislation pending "for perpetuity", with "indefinite delay" open to limited judicial scrutiny.

Among the Bills awaiting Presidential approval is the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (Amendment) Bill, 2025, referred in June, which reserves four per cent of small-value civil works and goods/services contracts for Muslims. Also pending is the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowment (Amendment) Bill, proposing five to ten per cent contributions from higher-income temples to support priests and low-income temples.

Other Bills pending since between 2015 and 2025 include amendments relating to the KPSC, RTE medium of instruction, mineral rights, registration, child marriage prohibition and Devadasi rehabilitation, criminal law. *—PTI*

Cannot fix timeline for Guv, Prez over assent to bill: SC

However, court says Guv cannot delay state bills indefinitely

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Supreme Court on Thursday held that the court cannot impose any timelines on Governors and the President to grant assent to Bills passed by state assemblies but at the same time said Governors do not have "unfettered" powers to sit on the Bills for "perpetuity".

In its unanimous opinion on the Presidential Reference, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice BR Gavai also held that "indefinite delay" by the Governors will be open to "limited judicial scrutiny" and that deemed assent of Bills cannot be granted by the court using its plenary power under Article 142. Deemed assent would amount to takeover of the role of a "separate constitutional authority," it said.

In its 111-page judgment, the court made it clear that "inaction" by Governors that is "prolonged, unexplained and indefinite" will certainly invite "limited judicial scrutiny" though the merits of their action under Article 200 cannot be looked into by Courts.

The 111-page opinion, notable for not naming an author judge, a practice last seen in the 2019 Ayodhya verdict, comes days before CJI Gavai's retirement.

Indefinite delay in granting assent to multiple Bills has led to frequent run-ins between the Opposition-ruled States, especially Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Punjab and their Governors.

'NO UNFETTERED POWER TO SIT ON BILLS'

The bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, PS Narasimha and AS Chandurkar, held that the Constitution intentionally provides flexibility and avoids rigid timelines for constitutional authorities. Governors, it said, cannot be reduced to "rubber stamps", but equally cannot stall legislative intent by holding Bills indefinitely.

Under Article 200, Governors have three options: grant assent, return the Bill for reconsideration, or reserve it for the President. They cannot simply withhold assent without returning the Bill. The court stressed that judicial timelines would be inappropriate, but directed that inaction that causes constitutional paralysis can be challenged, with courts permitted to nudge Governors to act "within a reasonable time".

The court was answering the Presidential reference in which President Droupadi Murmu had sought it's opinion under Article 143(1) on whether judicial timelines can be imposed on the President when dealing with state Bills. She posed 14 questions on the powers of Governors and the President under Articles 200 and 201. The move followed the 8 April ruling that deemed ten Tamil Nadu Bills assented under Article 142 after the Governor illegally withheld them. Article 200 allows Governors to assent, withhold, return or reserve Bills. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

PM Narendra Modi waves a gamcha after Nitish Kumar takes oath as the CM at Gandhi Maidan in Patna ***PHOTO: PTI***

Nitish is Bihar's CM for 10th time

PATNA, 20 NOV

Bihar's longest-serving Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was sworn in for a record 10th term at a grand ceremony at Gandhi Maidan, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several NDA Chief Ministers, and top alliance leaders. Governor Arif Mohammed Khan administered the oath of office on a massive makeshift stage erected for the event.

Alongside the 74-year-old Kumar, 26 ministers took oath, 14 from the BJP, 8 from JD(U), 2 from LJP (Ram Vilas), and 1 each from HAM and RLM. The NDA, which swept the polls with 202 of 243 seats, has given prominence to caste and regional balance in the new cabinet.

The crowd erupted when Modi, who had promised voters he would return for the NDA's swearing-in, lifted his signature 'gamchha' and swirled it above his head. From the JD(U) quota, all inductees served in the previous government — including Zama Khan, Bijendra Yadav, Shrawon Kumar, Vijay Chaudhary, Leshi Singh, Madan Sahni, Sunil Kumar, and Ashok Choudhary. *—PTI*

More on Page 3

Faces of Bihar

Total 26 ministers

DyCMs

Samrat Choudhary

Vijay Kumar Sinha

3 women ministers

Shreyasi Singh (BJP) | Rama Nishad (BJP)

Lesi Singh (JD(U))

Only 1 Muslim minister

Jama Khan (JD(U))

Congress minister, MLAs loyal to DKS head to Delhi

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

A minister and few MLAs loyal to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar headed to New Delhi on Thursday to meet top brass indicating a power tussle in the ruling Congress, sources said. The development came on a day after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah completed two-and-half-year term in office.There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the chief minister's post after the declaration of Assembly election results on 20 May, 2023, and the Congress had managed to convince the latter and made him the Deputy Cheif Minsiter . There were some reports that a compromise had been reached based on a "rotational formula," according to which Shivakumar will become CM after two-and-a-half years. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

NIA arrests 4 accused in Delhi blast

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

A Delhi court on Thursday sent four suspects arrested in the 10 November Red Fort car blast case to 10 days' National Investigation Agency (NIA) custody. The explosion outside the monument killed 15 people and is being probed as a "white-collar" terror plot.

The accused, doctors Muzammil Ganaie and Adeel Rather, preacher Maulvi Irfan Ahmed Wagay, all from Jammu and Kashmir, and Dr Shaheena Saeed from Lucknow were first arrested by the J&K Police. They were taken into NIA custody in Srinagar earlier in the day and produced before Principal District and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna at Patiala House Courts.

The NIA had sought 15 days' custody for interrogation, following which the court granted a 10-day remand. With these arrests, the total number of accused in the case has risen to six. The agency is already questioning two others, Amir Rashid Ali and Jasir Bilal Wani alias Danish.

Security was tight at the court complex, with Rapid Action Force personnel deployed alongside Delhi Police. Journalists were not permitted to enter the courtroom during the proceedings *—PTI*

More on Page 4

NO FIX FOR POTHOLES

A foreign tourist walks past a pothole at Shaanthaveri Gopala Gowda Circle near Vidhana Soudha on Thursday. Months of neglect have left motorists struggling across Bengaluru, as potholes remain despite the government's 31 October deadline to fix them. The craters have brought the City to its knees, with multiple accidents reported ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

B'LURU SUMMIT ENDS WITH ₹400 CR DEALS

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

Curtains came down on the three-day Bengaluru Tech Summit 2025 on Thursday.

According to the organisers, the government and venture capital firms disbursed up to Rs 400 crore to deep-tech start-ups at the Future Makers Conclave, the flagship event of BTS 2025. They said 20,680 delegates from 57 countries attended various conferences at the summit. More than 46,389 business visitors were also present, bringing the total attendance to about 92,500. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

WIN FOR PROJECT CHEETAH

Abandoned at birth, Mukhi beats the odds to birth 5 cubs

SHEOPUR, 20 NOV

Indian-born cheetah Mukhi has given birth to five cubs at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, marking a major milestone for India's cheetah reintroduction programme, officials said on Thursday. They described the births as a "strong sign" of the species' adaptation and long-term viability in Indian habitats.

Mukhi is the sole surviving cheetah cub born in India at Kuno and has become the first India-born cheetah to reproduce. Her survival itself was exceptional. Born on 29 March 2023 to Namibian cheetah Jwala, she endured extreme odds, including the death of her three siblings due to heat. She was also the only surviving first-generation cub of Namibian cheetah Siyaya, who delivered her just two days after another translocated female, Sasha, died of renal failure.

Mukhi's journey has been closely followed by wildlife officials, who hand-reared her after she was abandoned at birth. Her successful breeding is being seen as a critical breakthrough for Project Cheetah, the government's ambitious effort to revive the species in India decades after its extinction.

Mukhi watches as the five cheetah cubs feed from her ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav called the development "unprecedented", while Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said the birth of the cubs indicates "strong signs of adaptation, health and long-term viability" of cheetahs at Kuno.

Cheetahs were reintroduced on 17 September, 2022, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi released eight animals, five females and three males, brought from Namibia in the first intercontinental translocation of the species. *—PTI*

HC caps Sabarimala darshan at 75,000 amid crowd chaos

PATHANAMTHITTA, 20 NOV

Kerala High Court on Wednesday capped the number of Sabarimala pilgrims at 75,000 a day, observing that "all available resources at Sabarimala have reached breaking point, and neither the police nor the Devaswom Board is able to contain the inflow effectively."

Following the directive, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) on Thursday limited spot booking for darshan to 5,000 pilgrims per day. Spot booking will now be available only at Nilakkal and Vandiperiyar, while the facility at Pampa, Erumeli and Chengannur has been suspended until 24 November.

TDB urged devotees to rely primarily on the Virtual Queue system and to arrive strictly according to their allotted slot. Officials said the restrictions were essential after recent chaos at the hill shrine, where nearly two lakh pilgrims arrived within 48 hours of the temple opening on 17 November. The High Court criticised the TDB for inadequate crowd management. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

US to sell India Javelin missiles, Excalibur projectiles worth $93M

WASHINGTON / NEW YORK, 20 NOV

The United States has approved the sale of Excalibur guided artillery projectiles, Javelin anti-tank missile systems and related equipment worth nearly USD 93 million to India, marking New Delhi's first significant American defence purchase since President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods in August over Russian oil imports.

The Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said the State Department has authorised a potential Foreign Military Sale comprising Excalibur projectiles valued at USD 47.1 million and the Javelin missile system worth USD 45.7 million. Congress has been formally notified.

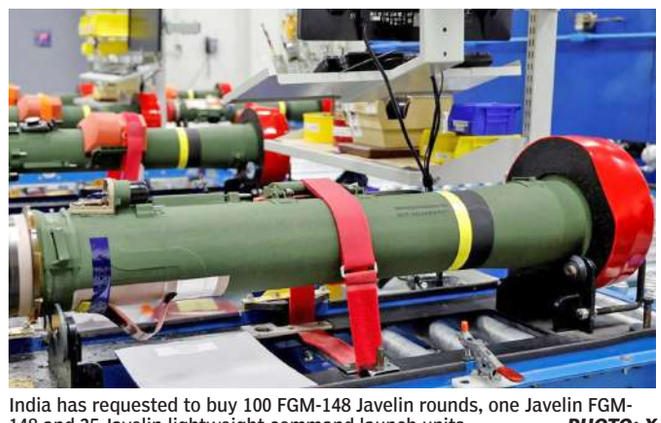
The US said the sale would bolster the security of a "major defence partner" and reinforce India's role as an "important force" for political stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia.

India has requested up to 216 M982A1 Excalibur tactical projectiles. Non-major defence equipment includes Portable Electronic Fire Control Systems, primers, propellant charges, technical assistance, repair services and other logistical support. The DSCA said the projectiles would significantly enhance India's precision-strike capability.

For the Javelin system, India has sought 100 FGM-148 Javelin rounds, one fly-to-buy missile and 25 Lightweight or Block 1 Command Launch Units. Non-MDE items include missile simulation rounds, battery coolant units and operator manuals, alongside refurbishment and programme support.

The agency said the sales would strengthen India's ability to meet current and future threats, enhance homeland defence and deter regional challenges.

It added that the purchases would not alter the regional military balance and could be readily absorbed by India's armed forces. *—PTI*



India has requested to buy 100 FGM-148 Javelin rounds, one Javelin FGM-148 and 25 Javelin lightweight command launch units ***PHOTO: X***

Smuggling of Rs 3.15 cr to Kerala from K'taka foiled

WAYANAD, 20 NOV

Customs officials on Thursday seized Rs 3.15 crore in cash from a car smuggled from Karnataka into Kerala. The vehicle, under surveillance for several months, was intercepted at Mananthavady in the early hours with support from police and central agencies, the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kozhikode, said. The operation, led by Joint Commissioner Shashikant Sharma and Deputy Commissioner Syam Nath S, followed intelligence inputs that a gang was moving contraband weekly from Bengaluru. A Hyundai Creta was found fitted with welded steel boxes concealed beneath rubber flooring under the seats, containing 630 bundles of currency. Three men from Vadakara were detained and confessed that the cash was supplied by Salman Kandathil, also from Vadakara. Follow-up searches were carried out at multiple locations near Karipur and Vadakara. —*PTI*

Speeding lorry kills motorcycle rider in Yadgir

YADGIR, 20 NOV

A bike rider died on the spot after a collision with a lorry within the Shahapur Police Station limits in Yadgir district. The victim, identified as Sopilal Peersab, 37, of Madarkal village, was travelling on the Shahapur–Surpur Road when a lorry coming from the opposite direction rammed his motorcycle. Police said the vehicle was allegedly driven at high speed and in a negligent manner by Balvant Singh, against whom a case has been registered. The impact threw Sopilal off the bike, causing severe injuries to his forehead and the back of his head. His right leg was also fractured and crushed. He succumbed to his injuries on the spot before any medical help could reach. —***Salar News***

CM says no 'Nov revolution', DKS camp flies to Delhi

Govt's half-term ends amid tussle over power sharing

CHAMARAJANAGAR/ BENGALURU, 20 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday dismissed rumours of a "November revolution" or an imminent change of leadership as "a media creation", even as ministers and MLAs loyal to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar travelled to New Delhi to meet the Congress High Command, signalling renewed churn within the ruling party.

The political buzz intensified a day after Siddaramaiah completed two-and-a-half years in office, a milestone that had fuelled speculation that he might hand over the reins to Shivakumar midway through the government's term. Responding to these claims, the Chief Minister insisted that his position "has been strong from the beginning and will remain strong". Asked whether he intended to lead the party into the 2028 Assembly elections, he said, "Let the election time come," but asserted that he would

CONG GOVT'S HALF-TERM

continue presenting budgets as long as people entrusted him with power. He has already announced plans to present his 17th Budget next year.

Siddaramaiah clarified that his earlier remarks about a cabinet reshuffle, communicated to the central leadership 30 months ago, had been misconstrued as an indication of leadership change. "I had only spoken about a reshuffle. After that, discussions about power sharing began," he said.

Meanwhile, the Shivakumar camp appeared active again. According to sources, Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy and MLAs Iqbal Hussain, HC Balakrishna and S R Srinivas left for Delhi on Thursday, with around 12 more MLAs expected to follow on Friday. Earlier, nearly a dozen MLCs had also camped in the capital and met senior Congress leaders.

The rivalry between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar dates back to the days immediately after the Congress's sweeping victory on 20 May 2023, when both leaders vied for the chief ministership.

Though reports had suggested a "rotational chief minister" formula under which Shivakumar would take over after two-and-a-half years, the party never confirmed such an arrangement. In Chamarajanagar, CM Siddaramaiah also rejected the long-standing superstition that CMs lose power after visiting the district, remarking that he had visited it "three dozen times" and has only grown stronger. — *Salar News*

UNDER COMPENSATION SCHEME

K'taka to give Rs 5L to victims of fatal dog bites

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

The government has rolled out a new compensation scheme for victims of stray dog attacks, including substantial financial support for families of those who die from dog bites. Under the revised directive, the families of individuals who die due to dog bites will receive Rs 5 lakh. For non-fatal injuries, victims will be paid Rs 5,000, of which Rs 3,500 will go directly to the injured person and Rs 1,500 to the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust to cover treatment expenses.

The announcement comes as Karnataka witnesses a steep rise in dog-bite cases. Between January and August 2025, the state recorded approximately 2.86 lakh cases, already exceeding the total for 2024. Some estimates place the figure even higher, with nearly 3.98 lakh cases reported up to October 2025. Officials say the surge may reflect improved reporting and greater public awareness, although the accuracy of some data has been questioned due to the way cases are recorded.

In previous years, Karnataka saw 1.63 lakh dog-bite cases in 2022 and 2.32 lakh in 2023. By August 2024, more than 2.22 lakh cases had been reported, rising to over 2.73 lakh by September, surpassing the entire count for 2023.

All municipal corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority will now be required to set up a Verification and Compensation Disbursement Committee to assess claims and ensure timely distribution of compensation. —*PTI*

HM says Bengaluru ATM heist culprits will be nabbed soon

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Thursday said police have gathered "all information" on the Rs 7.11-crore ATM cash-van heist in Bengaluru and expressed confidence the culprits would be arrested soon. A six-member gang posing as RBI officials intercepted the van in south Bengaluru on Wednesday afternoon, in what is being described as one of the city's biggest recent robberies.

Parameshwara said CCTV footage across the city was being analysed and technology was being used to verify if the gang had left Karnataka. One vehicle used in the crime carried a fake number plate cloned from a parked vehicle, he said. The gang is suspected to have switched vehicles after transferring the cash, with police now tracking inter-state movements.

Recalling past cases, the minister noted that two major robberies worth Rs 58 crore in Vijayapura were solved with all accused arrested.

Opposition Leader R Ashok criticised the government, calling the seven-minute, broad-daylight heist in a crowded area proof of collapsing law and order. —*PTI*

TO GET RS 2,950 MSP

Bidar sugarcane farmers call off eight-day protest

BIDAR, 20 NOV

Farmers withdrew their stir after getting assurance of receiving Rs 2,950 as support and celebrated by waving green shawls ***PHOTO: SALAR NEWS***

Sugarcane farmers in Bidar on Thursday ended their eight-day protest after a fourth round of negotiations with Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma yielded a breakthrough. Farmers had been staging a continuous sit-in outside the District In-charge Minister's office, demanding Rs 3,300 per tonne for cane on the lines of the Belagavi model, and had even blocked the national highway as part of their agitation.

The district administration had earlier argued that Bidar's lower sugar recovery rate made it impossible to match Belagavi's rates, but three previous meetings failed to end the deadlock. Farmers later insisted that a minimum of Rs 3,100 per tonne must be guaranteed.

During Thursday's meeting, District In-charge Minister Eshwar B Khandre called from Bengaluru and assured that factories would pay Rs 2,900 per tonne, with an additional Rs 50 State support price, totalling Rs 2,950 per tonne. He also promised to take a delegation of farmers to meet the CM to discuss their other demands. After getting assurance, farmers withdrew their stir, celebrating by waving green shawls.

Farmer leader Mallikarjun Swami told Salar News that Bidar urgently needs a sugarcane research centre, noting that Belagavi has two while Kalyana Karnataka has none. Farmers also demanded a monitoring committee comprising an IAS officer, Food Department officials, a chemist and farmer representatives to prevent manipulation in weight and recovery calculations. Deputy Commissioner Sharma said that sugar factories would be directed to pay Rs 2,950 per tonne and a proposal would be sent to the government. —*Salar News*

German exam centre opens for health professionals

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

The KVTSDC on Thursday signed an MoU with the German agency DeFa, paving the way for the launch of a new 'telc German Language Examination Centre' in the City.

The initiative aims to help healthcare professionals hoping for careers in Germany.

The new German language examination centre was inaugurated at the Karnataka German Technical Training Institute (KGTTI) in Peenya, the office of the Skill Development Minister, Sharanaprakash R Patil, said in a statement.

The Karnataka Vocational Training and Skill Development Corporation has begun shortlisting candidates, primarily nurses, who will undergo structured German language training.

"This programme will help healthcare professionals across Karnataka meet the standards essential for employment in Germany, where B2-level German proficiency is mandatory for registered nurses," Patil said.

The DeFa (Deutsche Fachkräfteagentur für Gesundheits-und Pflegeberufe GmbH), established by the German Federal Ministry of Health, plays a key role in ensuring ethical, transparent recruitment of international healthcare workers.

The telc (The European Language Certificates) exams are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), providing globally recognised certification for study, work, and residence in Germany.

Bruno Carlesso, the Director of Global Business at telc, signed the MoU on behalf of Germany. —*PTI*

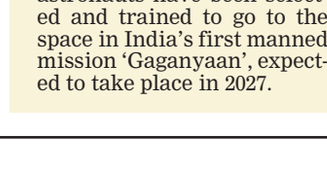
7 booked for Rs 31L SC/ST Yadgir housing fraud

YADGIR, 20 NOV

A case has been registered at Shahapur Police Station against seven members of a family for allegedly cheating 13 women of Rs 31.45 lakh under the pretext of securing houses and residential plots through a government SC/ST scheme.

The complaint, filed by Rupa Badigeri, names Vijayalakshmi Halaswami, Halaswami, Narasannagouda, Urakundayya and Ranganna among the accused.

According to the complaint, Vijayalakshmi claimed she had contacts at the SC/ST Head Office in Bengaluru and could secure housing benefits. Believing her assurances, Rupa and 13 others paid money in instalments over several years but received neither houses nor plots. When they demanded refunds, the women were allegedly assaulted and subjected to casteist abuse.



The complaint states that Vijayalakshmi collected Rs 19,600 and Rs 45,000 from each woman at various times, citing the need to pay advances to officials.

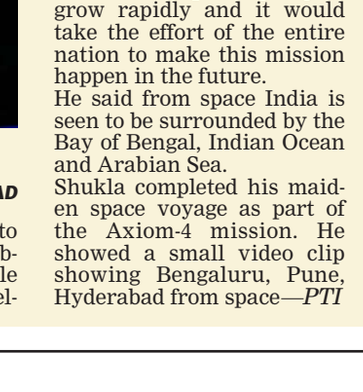
The group reportedly transferred Rs 16.45 lakh through PhonePe and paid another Rs 15 lakh in cash, totalling Rs 31.45 lakh. —*Salar News*

Netizens go gaga as Conan arrives in City

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

Comedian and late-night icon Conan O'Brien, host of the travel series 'Conan O'Brien Must Go', arrived in Bengaluru on Wednesday for a shoot, sending fans into a frenzy online.

This is O'Brien's first visit to India. Captioned in his signature comic style —"I'm shooting a reboot of Entourage in Bangalore (sic)"— the post quickly set off a wave of delighted reactions. Fans flooded the comments. One wrote, "Come to Basaveshwara Nagar Conan, let's have Benne Dose," while another urged, "Guru, come let's have a strong filter coffee." Several joked that they would now be "stepping out more often" in the hope of "accidentally running into" him. —*Agencies*



Conan O' Brien (centre) in Bengaluru ***PHOTO: X/@CONANOBRIEN***

Minister: SIT can file chargesheet in Dharmasthala case

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

Amid reports that the SIT probing the allegations of "multiple murders, rapes and burials" in Dharmasthala is likely to file a charge sheet, Home Minister G Parameshwara said that the government has given its clearance, and it is left to the investigating team to decide when to submit.

The Special Investigating Team (SIT) is likely to file the charge sheet before the Belthangady court very soon, sources said.

"They will have to do it within 90 days," Parameshwara told reporters on Thursday answering a question about the SIT filing charge sheet in the Dharmasthala case.

When asked whether any information has been shared with the government, he said that after filing the charge sheet in court, the SIT will share info with the government.

A controversy erupted after a complainant who was arrested for perjury, claimed that he had buried many bodies, including those of women with signs of sexual assault, in Dharmasthala over two decades, with the implications pointing towards the local temple's administrators.

The SIT which is probing the charges has conducted excavations at locations identified by the complainant in the forested areas along the banks of the Netravathi River in Dharmasthala and some skeletal remains were found at two sites. —*PTI*

State delegation to visit UK for investments

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

State Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil on Thursday said that he will visit London with a high-level delegation from 24 to 26 November to attract investments from leading UK-based companies.

He held discussions with Seema Malhotra, the UK Minister for Commonwealth Affairs and Development, and Linda Cameron, the British High Commissioner to India.

Patil noted that the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed between India and the United Kingdom earlier this year has created a favourable environment for investment.

The delegation will meet the heads of major companies such as Element-6, ARM, Linde, Martin-Baker, Fido AI, Oxford Space Systems, Green Jets, Nanopore Tech and others.The State aims to strengthen economic ties by encouraging UK companies to invest in sectors like higher education, technology exchange, high-tech manufacturing, aerospace, defence, electric vehicles, clean energy, and research-driven industries. It will meet the UK-India Business Council. —*PTI*

TECH SUMMIT ENDS

Shukla urges all to realise 'Viksit Bharat'

BENGALURU, 20 NOV

ISRO astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla speaks during the last day of three day Bengaluru Tech Summit 2025 at BIEC, Tumakuru road in Bengaluru on Thursday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla on Thursday called upon people to take up the responsibility to realise the dream of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) by 2047.

Shukla said this while addressing a gathering on the last day of the Bengaluru Tech Summit on Thursday. The summit began on 18 November.

Group Captain Shukla, an Indian Air Force officer and test pilot and three other astronauts have been selected and trained to go to the space in India's first manned mission 'Gaganyaan', expected to take place in 2027.

He said, "India will soon have its citizens going to space on an Indian launch rocket in an Indian capsule from Indian soil..... have to come together and contribute....how can you enable this to happen – from developing a simple straw to developing a complex life support system..." Shukla said that India already has 300 plus startups actively working in the space domain. According to him, the number of startups is going to grow rapidly and it would take the effort of the entire nation to make this mission happen in the future.

He said from space India is seen to be surrounded by the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

Shukla completed his maiden space voyage as part of the Axiom-4 mission. He showed a small video clip showing Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad from space—*PTI*

NDA tries to balance caste in Bihar Cabinet

Nitish's new Cabinet has 5 Dalits, 8 upper-caste leaders, including 4 Rajputs & 3 Yadavs

PATNA, 20 NOV

The newly sworn-in NDA government in Bihar has crafted a cabinet aimed at balancing caste and regional representation, accommodating five Dalits, eight upper-caste leaders, including four Rajputs, and three Yadavs. BJP, now the single largest party with 89 seats, has secured the lion's share of berths.

Former deputy chief ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, now the BJP's leader and deputy leader in the Assembly, returned to the cabinet. Senior BJP figures Mangal Pandey, Nitin Nabin and Surendra Prasad Mehta were also retained, while state party president Dilip Jaiswal made a comeback after stepping down two years ago under the 'one person, one post' rule. Former minister Narayan Prasad has also been re-inducted.

BJP has brought in several new faces: international shooter and two-term Jamui MLA Shreyasi Singh, Arun Shankar Prasad, Pramod Kumar, Lakhendra Kumar Raushan, Sanjay Singh Tiger and Rama Nishad. Former Union minister Ram Kripal Yadav, who lost the Patliputra Lok Sabha seat last year but won from Danapur, has also been included.

Smaller NDA allies have secured representation as well. From HAM, party president Santosh Suman, son of Jitan Ram Manjhi, has been re-inducted.

LJP(RV) MLAs Sanjay Kumar Paswan and Sanjay Kumar Singh, the latter having defeated Tej Pratap Yadav in Mahua, were sworn in.

Although the RLM won four seats, its representative in the cabinet is Deepak Prakash, son of Upendra Kushwaha, who is not currently a member of either House.

LJP(RV) chief Chirag Paswan hailed the induction of his party's two MLAs as a "major victory. —*PTI*

JD(U) Working President Sanjay Jha, HAM (S) chief and Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, LJP (Ram Vilas) Chief and Union Minister Chirag Paswan greet Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the swearing-in ceremony of the new Bihar Cabinet, at Gandhi Maidan in Patna *PHOTO: PTI*

> **Hope the new government will live up to the expectations and aspirations of the people of Bihar and bring a positive and qualitative difference in their lives**
>
> -Tejashwi Yadav, RJD leader

ONE CABINET TO RULE THEM ALL

Here's a look at the makeup of the Bihar Cabinet.

Alliance share:

BJP has **14 Ministers**	JD(U) **8**, including CM.
LJP (RV): **2**	HAM(S): **1**
RLM: **1**	

JD(U) stalwarts retained:

Bijendra Prasad Yadav, Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Narayan Prasad and Shrawon Kumar. All the JD(U) inductees in the new cabinet were ministers in the previous government.

Former ministers make a comeback

Mangal Pandey (BJP), Pramod Kumar (BJP), Surendra Prasad Mehta (BJP) and Nitin Nabin (BJP).

THE NEW FACES

Shooter-turned-MLA **Shreyasi Singh** (BJP) from Jamui

MLA **Rama Nishad** (BJP), daughter-in-law of former union minister Jaynarayan Nishad from Aurai

Deepak Prakash, son of RLM chief Upendra Kushwaha, entered the cabinet despite not being a legislator.

Ram Kripal Yadav (BJP) from Pataliputra. He is seen as an attempt to break the RJD's Yadav vote bank.

Lakhendra Raushan Paswan (BJP) from Bahadurgarh.

Rama Nishad (BJP) from Muzaffarpur, She is the wife of two-time MP Ajay Nishad.

Arun Shankar Prasad (BJP) from Khajauli.

Sanjay Singh Tiger (BJP) from Ara. He is seen as an OBC leader.

Sanjay Kumar Singh (LJP) from Mahua. He defeated Tej Pratap Yadav during the polls and is a fierce loyalist to party leader Chirag Paswan.

Sanjay Paswan (BJP) from Bakhari. He is seen as a prominent Dalit-Paswan leader.

State BJP Chief **Dilip Jaiswal** made a comeback into the council of ministers.

Longest serving CMs

Nitish is now the country's 8 longest serving CM. Here's a list of the others

Pawan Kumar Chamling Sikkim; 25 years.

Naveen Patnaik Odisha; 24 years.

Jyoti Basu West Bengal; 23 years.

Gegong Apang Arunachal Pradesh; 22 years

Lal Thanhawla Mizoram; 22 years.

Virbhadra Singh Himachal Pradesh; 21 years.

Manik Sarkar Tripura; 19 years.

Nitish Kumar Bihar; 19 years

M Karunanidhi Tamil Nadu; 18 years.

And Parkash Singh Badal Punjab; 18 years.

PK on silent fast at Gandhi Ashram

Chastened by the drubbing received by his Jan Suraaj Party (JSP) in the recently held Bihar assembly polls, political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Thursday undertook a day-long silent fast. Kishor visited the Bhitiharwa Ashram in West Champaran district, set up by Mahatma Gandhi about a century ago, for his "maun upvaas", according to a statement by the JSP. Kishor, who has a great admiration for Mahatma Gandhi, had chosen the same spot three years ago for launching a 3,500km-long "pada yatra" that culminated in the formation of Jan Suraaj Party on Gandhi Jayanti last year.

Jagan attends his 1st CBI court in graft case

HYDERABAD, 20 NOV

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy appeared before a special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court in Hyderabad on Thursday in connection with multiple quid pro quo investment cases. Reddy, president of the YSR Congress Party, faces trial as the prime accused in at least 11 cases linked to alleged corrupt deals during his father, the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy's, tenure from 2004 to 2009. The court had instructed him to attend proceedings by 21 November. Security measures were increased near the court following his appearance, marking his first in-person court visit since January 2020. Reddy is currently out on bail. —*PTI*

Belgium's SC to hear Choksi's appeal on 9 Dec

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Belgium's Supreme Court, the Court of Cassation, will hear fugitive diamond trader Mehul Choksi's appeal against extradition on 9 December. Choksi challenges an 17 October ruling by the Antwerp Court of Appeal, which upheld India's extradition request as "enforceable". Advocaat-generaal Henri Vanderlinden stated, "The Court of Cassation only checks the decision of the court of appeal on legal aspects," clarifying that new evidence cannot be introduced. The Antwerp appeal court found no risk of Choksi facing unfair trial conditions in India. Choksi, accused of being the primary perpetrator in a Rs 13,000 crore PNB scam, fled to Antigua in January 2018 and was later found in Belgium seeking treatment. India submitted an extradition request based on arrest warrants issued in Mumbai. —*PTI*

Key accused held in RSS leader son's murder case

FEROZEPUR, 20 NOV

Police arrested the prime suspect in high-profile murder, son of a Punjab RSS leader. Naveen Arora, son of Baldev Raj Arora, was shot dead by two unidentified motorcycle-borne assailants in Ferozepur on 15 November. Police were tipped off about movement of the accused, Gursimran Singh. He was apprehended while on his motorcycle and attempting to flee, allegedly opening fire. During the chase, Singh was shot in the leg before he was eventually arrested. Police state that Singh used a 0.32 bore pistol during the chase. Police are still investigating the motive and cross-verifying the murder weapon. —*Agencies*

PHOTO: ANI

Leopard enters R'than ministers' official residence

JAIPUR, 20 NOV

Panic spread in the high-security Civil Lines area here on Thursday after a leopard was spotted moving through the locality and even entered the compounds of a school and the official bungalow of a Rajasthan minister. The wild cat was first sighted entering the Tiny Blossom Senior Secondary School, prompting the school staff to close the classroom doors to keep the students safe. Later, it allegedly entered state Water Resources Minister Suresh Singh Rawat's official residence, located opposite the bungalow of Congress leader Sachin Pilot. After hours of effort, the forest department tranquilised and rescued the big cat, Chief Wildlife Warden Shikha Mehra said. The Civil Lines area also houses the Raj Bhavan, the Chief Minister's residence, and the official quarters of top ministers and bureaucrats. —*PTI*

Manipur must have a govt: Bhagwat as Centre eyes polls

IMPHAL, 20 NOV

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said that Manipur must have a government, and efforts are being made to install a government. Bhagwat arrived in Imphal on Thursday on a three-day visit, his first trio since ethnic violence broke out in the Northeastern state.

"Government and parties, I don't indulge very much in that, but Manipur must have a government," Bhagwat said. "Destruction is a matter of two minutes but construction takes two years... and constantly, during these trials and tribulations, constant efforts were not to let the people of Manipur asunder on different bases....we will definitely take everybody along. Without destroying anything, identity, etc, peace in material matters will come early, but internal peace will take some time."

His visit is part of the centenary celebrations of the RSS. Bhagwat will also hold a series of closed-door interactions with RSS members.

The Centre had imposed the President's rule in Manipur after chief minister N Biren Singh resigned, However, with the situation normalising, it has indicated that it will hold polls soon.

Meanwhile, hundreds of internally displaced persons in Imphal East and Imphal West districts staged sit-ins at their respective relief camps against celebrating the annual Sangai tourism festival scheduled from 21-30 Nov. —*PTI*

Mamata writes to CEC, calls SIR 'unplanned'

KOLKATA, 20 NOV

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state is being run in an "unplanned and coercive" manner, putting citizens and officials at risk.

She also claimed that the SIR exercise has reached an "alarming" and "dangerous" stage.

The chief minister alleged that the voters' list revision exercise is being "forced upon" people "without basic preparedness or adequate planning".

Pointing to "critical gaps" in training, lack of clarity on mandatory documentation, and the "near-impossibility" of BLOs meeting voters during their livelihood hours, Banerjee said the entire SIR exercise has become "structurally unsound".

The CM said the "human cost of SIR mismanagement is now unbearable", citing the death of an anganwadi worker serving as a booth-level officer in Mal, Jalpaiguri.

Meanwhile, the BJP alleged that Banerjee resorted to dramatics over SIR because her political survival depends on "shielding" a voter base created "fraudulently". —*PTI*

R'than lecturer on SIR duty dies

A supervisor, Santram Saini, engaged in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Rajasthan died after complaining of chest pains in Karauli, in Rajasthan. Family members alleged he had been under severe pressure due to the ongoing drive, officials said. The family claimed he had recently received a notice linked to the exercise.

ED files chargesheet against Robert Vadra in money laundering case

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed chargesheet against businessman Robert Vadra, husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a money laundering case. The money laundering case is linked to UK-based defence dealer and economic fugitive, Sanjay Bhandari.

The entrepreneur and son-in-law to Sonia Gandhi has come under scrutiny for possibly generating funds by routing deals through offshore entities linked to Bhandari.

The supplementary prosecution complaint has been filed before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court here, they said.

This is not Robert's first run-in with the ED, appearing in front of the agency in July of this year.

He is currently under investigation in three separate money laundering cases.

Bhandari was recently declared a Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO) by Delhi courts, for fleeing to London shortly after being investigated by the Income Tax Department in 2016. —*PTI*

Guv gives nod to prosecute KTR in Formula-E case

HYDERABAD, 20 NOV

Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma has approved the prosecution of BRS Working President KT Rama Rao in connection with the Formula E race case, official sources confirmed on Thursday.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Telangana sought permission from the state government to prosecute Rama Rao, an MLA, along with two other accused, senior IAS officer Arvind Kumar and former HMDA chief engineer BLN Reddy, in September this year. While the nod for Rama Rao's prosecution has been granted, clearance for Kumar is still pending from the Central government's Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

Rama Rao has dismissed allegations surrounding the case, stating he is prepared for a lie-detector test. He reiterated, "It was my decision to transfer the money on behalf of the government to the race organisers... there is no corruption in the matter."

The probe relates to alleged irregularities concerning payments totalling approximately Rs 55 crore, mostly in foreign currency, made during the previous BRS administration for the race held in Hyderabad in February 2023. The ACB registered a case against the three in December 2024. —*PTI*

PRESIDENTIAL ASSENT CASE

Guv not bound by aid, advice of ministers on bills, says SC

>>>CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The bench clarified that Governors are not bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers when deciding whether to return or reserve a Bill. If Cabinet advice were binding, Article 200 and 201 powers would be rendered meaningless, the court noted.

President also not bound by deadlines

The Constitution Bench set aside the 8 April judgment that imposed one-to-three month timelines and declared ten Tamil Nadu Bills "deemed assented". The ruling held that the President's discretion under Article 201 is similarly free of judicial timelines, and that courts cannot examine the constitutional validity of Bills before they become law.

SC rejects objections of opposition-ruled states

Opposition-ruled states, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal, had argued that the Presidential Reference was unnecessary, claiming that the 8 April judgment had already settled the law.

The court rejected this, stating that significant constitutional questions remained and that advisory jurisdiction under Article 143 is meant precisely for such clarifications.The bench said the reference raises issues striking "at the root of the continuation of our republican and democratic way" and therefore must be answered.

Only an opinion, says DMK

Reacting to the verdict, DMK MP and senior advocate P Wilson said the SC's views in the case are not binding judgments, citing the 1974 St Xavier's College ruling.

He pointed out that the April 8 verdict, which fixed timelines and led to 10 Bills being notified, remains unaffected as per paragraph 26 of the court's opinion.

The Tamil Nadu government and the Raj Bhavan have been in a prolonged confrontation over delays in gubernatorial assent, with the Governor recently claiming 81 per cent of Bills received till 31 October had been cleared. —*PTI*

Severe setback: Cong on US claiming Pak success in war

NEW DELHI, 20 JUNE

The Congress on Thursday described as "yet another severe setback" to India's diplomacy a US commission reportedly mentioning in its report of "Pakistan's military success over India" in a four-day clash, and asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of External Affairs will register their objections to it.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said US President Donald Trump has claimed 60 times so far that he had "halted Operation Sindoor", but Modi has kept "completely quiet."

The party's communications in-charge said the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission has just submitted its annual report to the US Congress. The commission set up jointly by the US Senate and House of Representatives has twelve independent members.

"China's role in the clash between Pakistan's and India's militaries drew global attention as Pakistan's military relied upon Chinese weaponry and reportedly leveraged Chinese intelligence. During the clash, triggered by India's response to a deadly insurgent attack that killed 26 civilians both countries attacked targets farther into one another's territories than at any time in 50 years," the report said, according to a screenshot shared by Ramesh.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump claimed that he threatened 350 per cent tariffs during the India-Pakistan war, after which Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif called him and said they would stop fighting. —*PTI*

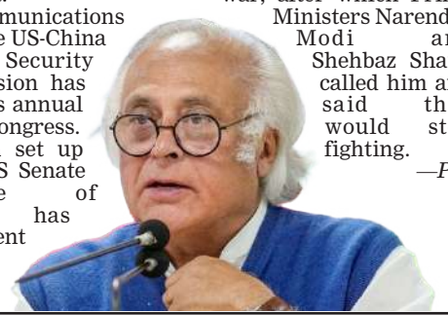


PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Biometrics now a must for Madrasa teachers in Aligarh

ALIGARH, 20 NOV

The Aligarh district administration has mandated biometric attendance for all madrasa teachers, officials said on Thursday. District Magistrate Sanjiv Ranjan stated that the directive follows Uttar Pradesh government instructions and will directly determine salary disbursement. "Henceforth, teachers' salaries will be released only on the basis of biometric attendance, ensuring greater transparency and accountability," he said. Ranjan added that the district's ongoing exercise to identify "illegal madrasas" has been paused, though no schedule has been set for its resumption. Officials have not provided a timeline for completing the verification of unregistered institutions, leaving inquiry status uncertain and raising concerns among administrators. *—PTI*

Teacher held as student dies after '100 sit-ups'

PALGHAR, 20 NOV

A woman teacher has been arrested over the death of a Class 6 pupil who was allegedly forced to do 100 sit-ups for arriving late to school in Maharashtra's Palghar district. The teacher, since removed from the private school in Sativali, Vasai, has been charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police said. The 13-year-old girl was reportedly made to perform the punishment on 8 November while carrying her school bag. Her mother claims the "inhuman" punishment caused her collapse. The girl, who had existing health issues, fell seriously ill and later died in a Mumbai hospital after seven days. The incident has called for police action. The education department and Vasai-Virar civic body have launched probe. *—PTI*

Four die of asphyxiation in Uttar Pradesh

KANPUR, 20 NOV

Four workers were found dead inside their rented room in the Panki industrial area in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur on Thursday, with police suspecting carbon monoxide poisoning caused by burning coal. The deceased, Arun Verma, 32, Sanju Singh, 22, Rahul Singh, 23 and Daud Ansari, 28, all hailing from Deoria, were employed at an oil seeds mill in Industrial Area Site-2. Three other workers who also stayed with them, had stepped out for the night. The deceased had lit a coal in a metal tray to keep warm and locked the room from inside, unaware that it lacked ventilation. The bodies were sent for autopsy to confirm the cause of death. *—PTI*

Southern Rly to start parcel service covering coasts

CHENNAI, 20 NOV

Southern Railway will operate 'coast-to-coast' parcel express train service across Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This initiative, the first by the Indian Railways, marks a significant step toward strengthening cost-effective regional parcel mobility. The parcel service would be operated on Fridays from Mangaluru Central and on Tuesdays from Royapuram, Chennai. The service would stop at Salem, Erode, Uttukkuli, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Shoranur, Tirur, Kozhikode, Thalassery, Kannur and Kasaragod ensuring smooth and efficient loading and unloading across major commercial centres. The first service of 'Parcel Express' will leave on 12 December from Mangaluru Central Railway Station and reach Royapuram Chennai the next day. The return train will leave Royapuram on 16 December. *—PTI*

'Docs, enggs engaging in anti-nat'l acts'

Delhi cops tells SC about growing trend among professionals; opposes bail of Khalid, Imam

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

The Delhi Police on Thursday vehemently opposed the bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, and others in the February 2020 riots case, asserting that a growing trend sees professionals like doctors and engineers engaging in anti-national activities.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, representing the police, told a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria that delays in the trial were caused by the accused and they cannot exploit it.

Raju presented top court videos of Imam delivering "inflammatory speeches" against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The clips showed him speaking at Chakhand, Jamia, Aligarh, and Asansol in 2019 and early 2020, preceding the February riots in Delhi.

Pointing out Imam's engineering background, Raju said, "Nowadays there is a trend that doctors, engineers are not doing their professions but engaging in anti-national activities." He added, "It's not a simple protest. These are violent protests. They are talking about blockades."

Justice Kumar queried whether the speeches were included in the chargesheet, to which Raju confirmed they were.

Khalid, Imam, Gulfisha Fatima, Meeran Haider, and Rehman were booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and provisions of the erstwhile IPC for allegedly orchestrating the 2020 riots, which killed 53 people and injured over 700.

The unrest erupted amid widespread protests against the CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The hearing will resume after 2 pm. *—PTI*

The Delhi Police on Thursday vehemently opposed the bail pleas of activists Khalid, Imam, and others in the February 2020 riots case *PHOTO: PTI*

SC STAYS HARYANA STF PROBE AGAINST LAWYER

New Delhi, 20 Nov

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the Haryana STF investigation against Delhi advocate Vikram Singh, arrested in a murder case, and confirmed his interim bail granted on November 12.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for him, alleged custodial torture, claiming Singh was tied to a pole overnight, threatened, and forced to cut his hair. He accused STF officials of pressuring the lawyer to "settle" a gang war involving his clients.

"I am not asking for discharge today; let the CBI status report come first," he told the bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justices Prasanna B Varale and K Vinod Chandran.

The bench clarified that the stay applied only to Singh and not the entire probe, and a plea to transfer the investigation to the CBI will be considered later.

The Haryana counsel denied wrongdoing, saying Singh's bail bond was furnished the next day and alleged he initiated WhatsApp contact with investigators.

Singh, enrolled since 2019, was lodged in Faridabad jail before bail. *—PTI*

SC raises MP judicial officers' retirement age

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday raised the retirement age of Madhya Pradesh judicial officers from 60 to 61 years.

A bench including Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Prasanna B Varale noted the Telangana High Court had granted similar relief and questioned why MP officers should be denied it. "Judicial officers, like other state employees, draw salaries from the same public exchequer," the bench said, noting other state employees retire at 62.

High court judges retire at 62, creating a one-year gap with district judges. The plea for final hearing is posted after four weeks. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan opposed the increase. *—PTI*

Sabarimala case: SIT arrests ex-TDB chief Padmakumar

T'PURAM, 20 NOV

The SIT investigating the Sabarimala temple gold-loss case on Thursday arrested former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) president A Padmakumar after questioning him at the Crime Branch office, police officials said. The former CPI(M) MLA was taken into custody after his statement was recorded.

Sources said Padmakumar was arrested in the case involving gold missing from the Sreekovil doorframes after he was named an accused. He headed the TDB in 2019 when the board considered a proposal to hand over the gold-clad copper plates of the Dwarapalaka idols and the sanctum doorframes to prime accused Unnikrishnan Potty for electroplating.

Though Padmakumar has claimed he was not president when the plates were actually handed over, the SIT maintains the proposal was processed during his tenure. Officials said he had twice sought more time to appear for questioning but complied after receiving a fresh notice.

Padmakumar, a senior CPI(M) leader from Pathanamthitta and former Konni MLA, will be produced before the Vigilance Court in Kollam for remand, police said.

Meanwhile, the court sent his successor, N Vasu, to SIT custody till Thursday evening. The SIT had sought a day's custody for further interrogation and was granted access until 4 pm. BJP workers protested near the court during Vasu's production, attempting to block the vehicle taking him to the Crime Branch office. With Padmakumar's arrest, the SIT has detained five people, including Potty and Vasu. *—PTI*

SIA raids Kashmir Times office, seizes arms, ammo

JAMMU, 20 NOV

The State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Thursday raided the Kashmir Times head office in Jammu, recovering arms, ammunition and documents while probing allegations that the publication promoted anti-national activities.

The agency also searched the home of owner Prabodh Jamwal in Gandhi Nagar.

The searches, conducted before an Executive Magistrate, follow an FIR accusing the outlet of conspiring with secessionist groups, spreading radical content and inciting disaffection through its platforms.

Officials said investigators seized a revolver, empty AK cases, live rounds, fired bullets, grenade safety levers and suspected pistol ammunition.

The material will undergo forensic analysis to determine possible extremist links.

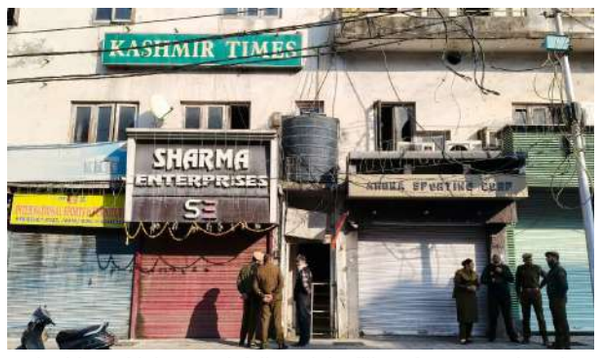
Editors Prabodh Jamwal and Anuradha Bhasin denounced the raids as an attempt to silence independent journalism.

In a joint statement, they said criticising the government was not "inimical to the state" and argued that a questioning press strengthened democracy.

Calling the allegations intimidation, they urged authorities to withdraw the charges and respect press freedom, noting the outlet has operated digitally since its print edition was suspended in 2021–22.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Singh Choudhary said action must follow only where wrongdoing is proven and warned against using raids as pressure.

Separately, authorities in J&K's Anantnag district inspected lockers at Government Medical College after an AK-47 was earlier recovered, identifying unclaimed lockers for record updates. *—PTI*



Authorities said the search followed the filing of a case against the publication and individuals associated with it *PHOTO: PTI*

NIA probes Kerala health club in organ trafficking

KOCHI, 20 NOV

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is probing the activities of a health club in Kerala operated by the persons accused in a human trafficking racket to harvest organs, the central agency has informed a court here.

The case pertains to alleged trafficking of people to Iran to harvest organs. While the donors hailed from Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the recipients belong to various north Indian states.

The prime accused Madhu Jayakumar of Vattathipadam, Palarivattom and two others, Sabith Nasar of Thrissur and Sajith Shyam collected money through an account in the name of Stemma Club maintained with South Indian Bank. They trafficked people to Iran after first inducing them with money and later threatening them.

Jayakumar was arrested upon his arrival from Iran on 7 November. A NIA court granted his custody to the anti-terror agency from 12 to 19 November. Trafficked persons were forced to give their kidneys in life-threatening situation, an NIA affidavit said. The accused extorted huge sums of money and amassed illegal wealth in the form of money, crypto assets and landed properties.

In 2024, Nasar was intercepted by immigration officials at Kochi airport for being part of an organised organ trafficking network. Later, Shyam and Bellankonda Ram Prasad, a Vijayawada native were arrested. The network charged up to Rs 50 lakh per transplant. *—PTI*

- The agency is probing the activities of the club operated by the persons accused in a human trafficking racket to harvest organs

UP man assaults wife, gives triple talaq; FIR filed

SONBHADRA, 20 NOV

A case has been registered against eight people in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district after a woman alleged that her husband gave her triple talaq, assaulted her, and forced her out of their home, police said on Thursday.

Ayesha Parveen, a resident of NPCC Colony in Anpara, filed a complaint at the Mahila police station on 12 November. She married Faisal Ahmed on 14 July 2022. According to Superintendent of Police Abhishek Verma, Ayesha stated that her family provided Rs 3.5 lakh in cash and jewellery at the time of marriage, yet her husband, mother-in-law Salma Begum, and other relatives continued to harass her for dowry. She also accused her brother-in-law, Saqib, of inappropriate behaviour.

Ayesha said she was beaten, given triple talaq, and thrown out. She is now living with her mother in Ballia. Police said her husband allegedly remarried in October. An FIR has been lodged against all the eight accused. *—PTI*

TRUMP JR AT TAJ MAHAL

Donald John Trump Jr, son of US President Donald Trump, and his wife Vanessa Trump visited the iconic Taj Mahal in Agra on Thursday, spending nearly an hour admiring the monument under a tight security cover. Arriving around 3.30pm, he held an extended photo session across the complex, including the iconic Diana bench. Officials said he showed keen interest in the Taj's history and craftsmanship, asking guide Nitin Singh detailed questions—Singh had also guided President Trump in 2020. Trump Jr is also expected to attend a high-profile wedding in Udaipur. Don Jr was with a delegation of 126 guests from over 40 countries *PHOTO: PTI*

UNICEF REPORT

206M Indian children lack basic services

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

India is on track to meet its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of halving multidimensional poverty before 2030. However, 206 million children still lack at least one essential service, UNICEF said on Thursday.

According to the 'State of the World's Children 2025' report, nearly half of India's children face deprivations in basic services such as education, health, housing, nutrition, clean water or sanitation.

Of them, 62 million face two or more deprivations and need targeted support.

Released on World Children's Day, the report noted that while access to basic services has expanded for over half of India's 460 million children, progress remains uneven.

UNICEF termed India's poverty-reduction efforts "pivotal," citing the National Multidimensional Poverty Index showing 248 million people escaping poverty between 2013–14 and 2022–23 as the rate fell from 29.2 per cent to 11.3 per cent.

A rise in social protection coverage—from 19 per cent in 2015 to 64.3 per cent in 2025, reaching 940 million people—has underpinned these gains.

"There is no greater return on investment than investing in children," UNICEF India Representative Cynthia McCaffrey said.

Despite demonstrating a significant progress, the report flagged persistent inequalities, especially among children with disabilities, particularly among crisis-hit regions and younger age groups.

According to the global data, one in five children in low- and middle-income countries face at least two severe deprivations. *—PTI*

55% of juvenile cases still pending

New Delhi, 20 Nov

Over 50,000 children in conflict with the law remain stuck in a clogged justice system, with 55 per cent of over one lakh cases pending before 362 Juvenile Justice Boards, the India Justice Report said on Thursday. Pendency ranges from 83 per cent in Odisha to 35 per cent in Karnataka. One in four boards lacks a full bench, and key infra gaps persist, including missing legal aid clinics, inadequate inspections, limited places of safety, and scarce district-level data, highlighting systemic transparency failures. - PTI

80-yr-old widow wins battle for pension after 5 decades

CHANDIGARH, 20 NOV

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has granted relief to an 80-year-old widow who has spent nearly five decades seeking her late husband's family pension and other retirement benefits.

Justice Harpreet Singh Brar, in an order dated 14 November, directed the principal secretary or administrative head of Haryana's electricity department to verify her claims within two months and ensure that all lawful dues are released.

The court noted that the illiterate and destitute petitioner had been forced to run from pillar to post since her husband, Maha Singh, a lineman-II appointed in 1955, died in harness in 1974 while serving under the Haryana State Electricity Board.

Except for an ex gratia payment of Rs 6,026, she received no other benefits despite repeated representations, a 2005 writ petition, and a later RTI application. Authorities cited missing records and continued exchanging correspondence without granting substantive relief.

Justice Brar stressed that constitutional courts must safeguard the rights of the most vulnerable, observing that the Preamble and Articles 14, 19 and 21 mandate protection of the marginalised. Extending relief, he said, is not benevolence but a constitutional imperative. The court disposed of the petition accordingly. *—PTI*

DEMOLITION DRIVE IN VARANASI

Shopkeepers vacate their establishments during a demolition drive as part of a road-widening project, despite protests from locals, in Varanasi on Thursday. Residents claimed that Muslim families were being targeted in Dal Mandi, as officials used bulldozers to demolish their houses and trading establishments. Notably, the historic market is some 300m from the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, and was once known for pluralism and communal harmony ***PHOTO: PTI***

India to explore ocean depths with Samudrayaan

Two scientists from a top ocean institute will pilot a 28-tonne indigenously built manned submersible up to 500 metres deep off Chennai coast early next year, marking India's entry in the coveted group of select countries with such capabilities.

India's own aquanauts – Ramesh Raju and Jatinder Pal Singh – from the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) will pilot the Matsya-6000 to unravel the mysteries of the ocean as part of India's Deep Ocean Mission.

"We have explored the ocean bed at greater depths using remotely operated vehicles. This is for the first time we will be sending humans at a depth of 6,000 metres and safety is paramount for this mission," Balaji Ramakrishnan, Director, NIOT, told PTI here.

India's Samudrayaan project, spearheaded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is also considered as a reflection of the spirit of self-reliance as global tenders were issued twice to procure a manned deep sea submersible, which ran into technology denials, prompting the government to develop the vessel in-house.

"We took it up as a challenge. We have the expertise to dive under water, but only up to 1000 metres. Once we embarked on the project and started travelling to allied labs, we found that expertise and technologies were available within the country in laboratories of DRDO and CSIR, and institutes of ISRO," Ramakrishnan said.

The scientists believe that sending humans to explore the undersea world expands possibilities of new discoveries exponentially and they are trained to make decisions on the spot.

"No camera can match the human eye. It has a different perception that will give a lot of insights to the deep sea floor," Sathia Narayanan, Project Director, Samudrayaan, told PTI.

The deep ocean is home to several unexplored minerals, fuels, and biodiversity resources and only a few countries such as the United States, Russia, China, Japan, and France have the capability to carry out exploration at such depths. India will join this select group of nations with the success of the Samudrayaan project.

The Matsya-6000, which will be piloted by two Indian aquanauts ***PHOTO: X/KIRENRIJIJU***

India has a 11,098 km-long coastline and the government has pushed for a blue economy policy to harness ocean resources for economic growth.

A short walk from Ramakrishan's office within the NIOT campus, the Matsya-6,000, India's home-built deep sea submersible is taking shape. The 2.25 metre diameter sphere made of boiler steel, sits comfortably on the exo-structure carrying within it high-density Lithium-Polymer (Li-Po) batteries, drop weight emergency escape systems, main and variable ballast tanks, propellers and emergency buoys that are part of the drag anchor emergency rescue system.

The Matsya-6000 will first take scientists up to a depth of 500 metres early next year to begin. It is the maximum depth at which naval submarines operate. Indian scientists plan to dive to over 10 times that depth in 2027, when ISRO will attempt taking Indian astronauts on a spaceflight on the Gaganyaan mission.

To dive to 6,000 metres depth, the personnel sphere made of boiler steel will be replaced by a titanium sphere which is being fabricated at ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre at Bengaluru.

The Bengaluru lab developed the electron beam welding facility to build the titanium alloy sphere with 80 mm thick walls to withstand 600 bar pressure experienced at 6,000 metre depth.

The Matsya-6000 is an autonomous vehicle that can travel to the bottom of the sea at a speed of 30 metres per minute. It is equipped with portholes and external lights for illuminating the dark depths. The research vehicle will also have robotic arms to collect samples, and external cameras.

All the equipment will be certified by DNV – a global assurance and risk management organisation – making them light to dive and sturdy enough to withstand the pressure of the water column, which increases by one atmospheric pressure for every 10m.

"The DNV certification for every component will make Matsya-6000 one of the safest vessels to undertake deep ocean exploration," Sethuraman Ramesh, Group Head, Deep Sea Technology, NIOT, said.

In August, the two scientists had travelled to a depth of 5000 metres onboard the French submersible Nautile.

The journey gave them rare insights into operation of the submersible and the experiences are proving to be handy in development of the Matsya-6000. *—PTI*

SALAR

Is Nitish Bihar's 'Paltu Ram' or a resilient Phoenix?

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar ***PHOTO: PTI***

In a political career spanning 50 years, Nitish Kumar has displayed an uncanny knack for rising like a Phoenix every time sceptics and detractors have sought to write him off.

The most atypical of politicians owing their rise to post-Mandal politics, Nitish Kumar stood out for his ability to address the governance deficit, unlike a majority of the breed reared in the socialist stable, but was often accused of pursuing politics of opportunism.

Call it political opportunism or sagacity, his moves, in effect, have not allowed the BJP to appoint its own chief minister to date, despite enjoying a near hegemonic status nationally and the best performance in recently held assembly polls where the saffron party bagged 89 seats, followed by the JD(U) with 85.

His frequent switching sides in his political career earned him the nickname 'Paltu Ram', whereas he is also called 'sushashan babu' for good governance.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, his JD(U) outperformed the BJP in terms of strike rate, winning as many seats despite contesting one less than the saffron party, which now depends on the state ally for survival in power at the Centre, having fallen short of a majority.

An engineer by training who had taken an active part in the JP movement, Kumar spurned a job offer from the state electricity department and decided to take the political gamble, an oddity among educated youth in Bihar for whom the lure of "sarkaari naukri" remains undiminished.

Unlike Lalu Prasad and Ram Vilas Paswan, his co-travellers during the movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan, electoral success eluded Kumar for long.

He got the first taste of victory, after three successive defeats, in the 1985 assembly polls when he won from Harnaut as a candidate of the Lok Dal.

Four years later, he entered the Lok Sabha from Barh even as fellow MP from Saran Lalu Prasad shifted to Bihar, taking over as the CM and scripting a spectacular success story.

The next decade and a half saw Prasad's rise as one of the most powerful but controversial figures of his time, who ruled the state by proxy, getting his demure homemaker wife Rabri Devi elected as his successor, when a charge sheet in the fodder scam caused him to step down as the CM.

During the same period, Kumar burnt his bridges with Prasad, floated the Samata Party, and built his own political edifice brick by brick.

The Samata Party joined forces with the BJP, and Kumar made a mark for himself as an outstanding parliamentarian.

After a rift between Sharad Yadav, the then Janata Dal president, and Lalu Prasad, the latter broke away and formed the RJD. The Samata Party merged with Sharad Yadav's Janata Dal while continuing its alliance with the BJP.

After the NDA lost power in 2004, a victory in Bihar held out the promise of a degree of redemption for the BJP-led alliance.

Attempts to wrest power from the RJD-Congress combine, then in power at the Centre as well, after the NDA fell short of a majority in the assembly polls of February 2005, were stymied by Governor Buta Singh's controversial move to dissolve the assembly, without it having even been constituted, in the face of alleged horse trading.

This proved a blessing in disguise for Kumar, who was projected as the chief ministerial candidate in the elections that took place nine months later, and the JD(U)-BJP combine got a comfortable majority, bringing the so-called "Lalu era" to an end.

Kumar's first five years as CM are recalled with admiration even by critics, marked as these were by vast improvement in law and order.

Realising fully well that, unlike Lalu, he did not have the advantage of belonging to a populous caste group, Kumar created sub-quotas among OBCs and Dalits who were called "Ati Pichhda" (EBC) and "Mahadalits".

He also brought in measures like free bicycles and school uniforms for school-going girls, which won him much adulation, and saw him return to power in 2010, leading the JD(U)-BJP coalition to a landslide victory in the assembly polls.

He ultimately snapped his party's 17-year-old ties with the BJP in 2013 when Modi was anointed BJP's campaign committee chief for the 2014 LS polls.

After parting ways with the BJP, he won a trust vote with Congress' support, but stepped down in 2014, owning moral responsibility for the JD(U)'s drubbing in the LS elections.

In less than a year, he was back as the CM, elbowing out his rebellious protege Jitan Ram Manjhi with support from the RJD and Congress.

The Grand Alliance that came into being with the JD(U), Congress and RJD coming together, won the 2017 assembly polls but came apart in just two years, after Kumar insisted that Lalu's son and deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav, whose name had cropped up in a money laundering case related to the time when RJD supremo was the railway minister, "come clear" on the issue.

He abruptly resigned as the CM as the RJD refused to budge, only to be back in office in less than 24 hours with BJP's support.

His acceptability in political camps on either side of the ideological divide was on display when he dumped the BJP in 2022, accusing it of having tried to "break" the JD(U), and, while surviving in power with RJD, Congress, and Left as new allies, cobbled together a new front that was to be known as the INDIA bloc.

True to form, he jettisoned the anti-BJP front when he felt it was not giving him the respect that was his due, only to be welcomed back into the NDA with open arms. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

G20: Political theatre instead of meaningful action

- US President Donald Trump has boycotted this year's summit claiming that white ethnicities were being prosecuted in South Africa. When he tried to target Ramaphosa during their White House interaction earlier, he showed photos from other countries

Behind the talk of fighting inequality at the group of 20 most powerful economies in the world, the G20, lies a carefully staged show – one that manages dissent rather than redistributes power.

Inequality is at the top of the G20 agenda this year, with South Africa holding the presidency. President Cyril Ramaphosa has said that if the G20 wants to tackle major global economic challenges, it must act fast to reduce inequality.

Well-funded non-governmental organisations like Oxfam have praised this stance, saying that the G20 is: Giving a voice to people crushed by inequality.

But such organisations don't directly represent grassroots constituencies. In commenting on inequality, they risk making blanket statements.

South Africa is still the most unequal country in the world. Research on grassroots democracy in townships and informal settlements shows that most residents have been silenced in the name of democracy. The ANC government's market-based policies turned basic needs like water and electricity into commodities and reinforced the private property system inherited from apartheid.

Economic inequality has deepened in the post-apartheid era, since 1994. As a result, one of South Africa's union federations objected to the South African government even talking about inequality because of the government's role in creating it.

Including grassroots communities in discussions about governance, public services, and other social and economic issues becomes a polite consultation. This justifies existing power structures instead of challenging them. People may appear to have a voice, but the outcomes are already decided.

The G20's inequality agenda is simply a way of governing through spectacle or political theatre – a show in which leaders can appear to respond to serious problems faced by the working class while protecting the system that benefits elites.

The G20 was formed in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, when the collapse of major banks and housing markets exposed deep cracks in the global economy.

The G20 was created to restore confidence and show that leaders were listening to ordinary people. It presented itself as a forum of inclusive global governance, where the world's major economies come together to "listen" to civil society and address crises collaboratively.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be leading the G20 summit this year ***PHOTO: G20***

As part of the G20's process of consulting different sectors of society ahead of its annual summits, elites (such as heads of state and finance ministers) hold joint press conferences with non-profit organisations and dialogues with civil society.

Working groups of activists and elites are formed, and consensus statements are issued. But there's no handover of power or action taken to dismantle capitalism, which keeps poverty and inequality in place.

In other words, minor but important reforms can potentially be made to the benefit of the working class, such as minimum wage laws and universal health care – which we should support – but the underlying process of development – based on a capitalist mode of production – relies on the extraction of resources, destruction of the environment and exploitation of those with the least.

The book 'The Participation Paradox', by Luke Sinwell offers a lens through which the G20's current performance of "participation" can be viewed. It argues that governments and international institutions now routinely invite communities into participatory forums. But these gestures often depoliticise struggle.

In other words, they appear to be a space where the powerful include working-class and impoverished communities, allowing them to have a say. However, these forums often reproduce top-down power. They do this by setting the agenda, controlling who gets to speak, and limiting what can actually change.

In this way, participation becomes less about empowering ordinary people to take part in important decisions about public spending, governance, service delivery and other pressing issues and more about legitimating decisions already made.

This is done through a performative "listening" designed to stabilise, not subvert, the capitalist order. In other words, it is mostly for show. The G20 reaffirms the system of capitalism, which reproduces inequality and puts profit before people.

In this sense, the process works as a spectacle – a public performance where those in power put on a show of listening and action to make things look democratic, even though very little actually changes.

The Civil 20 (C20), meanwhile, an official civil society engagement group for the G20, seems to offer an alternative. It is made up of representatives of over 3,000 organisations worldwide. Its objective is to hold the G20 to account. But does it have any real power?

The path ahead must be grounded in participation, redistribution, and environmental justice.

Being heard is not the same as wielding authority.

As the G20 summit unfolds, we are likely to witness the C20 being used as window dressing. *—The Conversation*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

After months of feud, Musk, Trump rekindle bromance

WASHINGTON, 20 NOV

Hours after signalling a possible easing of tensions with billionaire Elon Musk, President Donald Trump again targeted the Tesla CEO, ensuring their rift remained in focus. Addressing the US-Saudi Investment Forum, Trump repeatedly mentioned the "favours" he claimed to have done for Musk during his leadership stint at the Department of Government Efficiency. Glancing in Musk's direction, Trump remarked, "You're so lucky. I'm with you, Elon." Moments later, he joked, "Though I do let him buy cars that aren't electric – but those are minor details." Later, Musk posted on X, "I would like to thank Trump for all he has done for America." —*ANI*

B'desh SC restores non-partisan caretaker govt

DHAKA, 20 NOV

The Supreme Court of Bangladesh on Thursday ordered the restoration of the non-partisan caretaker government system for future elections, but said the ruling would not apply to the 13th general elections scheduled for February 2026. The judgment revives the earlier constitutional provision scrapped under former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government and directs a phased implementation that keeps the now-disbanded Awami League out of upcoming polls. Bangladesh first introduced the caretaker model in 1996, with two elections supervised by retired chief justices widely deemed credible. A third, in 2008, was held under a military-backed interim authority. Later polls under the Awami League faced allegations of manipulation.—*PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Indonesian volcano erupts, 170 hikers evacuated

JAKARTA, 20 NOV

Indonesian authorities said on Thursday they helped around 170 climbers who were caught a day earlier by Mount Semeru's sudden eruption to return to safety as the seismic activity of Java island's highest volcano indicated that the eruption will continue. About 178 people, including climbers, porters, guides, tourism officials and tourists, started their way up the 3,676-metre (12,060-foot) mountain in the Lumajang district of East Java province on Wednesday and became stranded at the Ranu Kumbolo camping area. Another official at the centre, Hetty Triastuty, added that Ranu Kumbolo is a safe area located outside the main danger zone of 8km from the crater. —*PTI*

Former Philippine mayor convicted of human trafficking

MANILA, 20 NOV

A Philippine court convicted a former mayor, who officials say is a Chinese national, of human trafficking charges for helping establish an illegal online gaming complex in a northern province where hundreds of Chinese and other foreign nationals were forced to engineer scams. The Pasig City trial court in Manila sentenced Alice Guo to life in prison with seven other Filipino and Chinese co-accused, and ordered them to pay a fine of 2 million pesos (USD 34,000) each and compensate trafficking victims. Guo denied all allegations against her and says she is a Filipino citizen. —*PTI*

Trump signs bill to release Epstein files

Says sex scandal files will expose Democrats

WASHINGTON, 20 NOV

US President Donald Trump signed legislation on Wednesday that compels his administration to release files on convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, bowing to political pressure from his own party after initially resisting those efforts.

Trump could have chosen to release many of the files on his own months ago.

"Democrats have used the Epstein' issue, which affects them far more than the Republican Party, in order to try and distract from our AMAZING Victories," Trump said on Truth Social.

Now, the Justice Department must release all files and communications related to Epstein, as well as any information about the investigation into his death in a federal prison in 2019, within 30 days.

It allows for redactions about Epstein's victims for ongoing federal investigations. But the DOJ cannot withhold information due to "embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity."

The Epstein files subject to release are documents from criminal investigations into the financier, including transcripts of interviews with victims and witnesses, and items seized in raids of his properties. Those materials include internal justice department communications, flight logs, and people and entities connected to Epstein.

The files are different from the more than 20,000 pages of documents from Epstein's estate released by Congress last week, including some that directly mention Trump. Some references include him providing fellatio to former president Bill Clinton.

Over the weekend, Trump did a sharp U-turn on the files, having previously said the whole issue was a hoax.

Epstein was convicted for prostitution and had reportedly trafficked thousands of woman, including underage girls, many of whom have committed suicide.—*Agencies*

US President Donald Trump has a conversation with convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein at a party in 1992 **PHOTO: X**

Ro Khanna, the lawmaker who cracked MAGA

WASHINGTON, 20 NOV

Indian-origin Rep Ro Khanna was instrumental in ensuring that the Congress voted 427-1 to release the Epstein files.

The presidential prospect teamed up with Rep Thomas Massie to introduce the Epstein Files Transparency Act in July, which attracted Republican co-sponsors and enough signatures to end-run House GOP leaders and force a vote, thereby splitting the Republican base on the issue.

The bill requires the Justice Department to release its records related to Epstein, the late financier and convicted sex offender within 30 days

The Californian Democrat took a bipartisan approach in his speeches and campaigning to release the Epstein files. Rather than taking the Democrat stance of solely attacking Republicans and Trump, he targeted an "Epstein class that accumulated power and doesn't play by the rules." —*Salar News*

WASHINGTON DECLARES EMERGENCY OVER AIRPORT FUEL LEAK

SEATTLE, 20 NOV

Washington state's governor declared an emergency on Wednesday to ensure enough jet fuel gets to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport after a leak shut down a major fuel pipeline.

The order temporarily waives and suspends state regulations limiting the number of hours commercial vehicle operators can drive when transporting jet fuel, Gov Bob Ferguson's office said in a statement. The proclamation ensures safe-driving measures are in place, the release said.

The Olympic Pipeline was shut down on 11 November because of a leak north of Seattle, between the cities of Everett and Snohomish. There was no estimate for when the pipeline would resume delivering fuel normally.

But if it doesn't start back up by Saturday, airport operations would be "significantly affected." The governor's office did not specify on what that impact would be. The airport "has limited fuel to sustain operations," it said. —*PTI*

MAGA lets in skilled immigrants: Trump

Trump told an audience of business executives that the US needs immigrants who can train domestic workers in high-tech factories, adding that "This is MAGA. Those people are going to teach our people how to make computer chips."—*PTI*

250 immigrants held in North Carolina

Federal agents have now arrested more than 250 people during a North Carolina immigration crackdown centred around Charlotte, the state's largest city, the Department of Homeland Security said. The operation began largest so far. —*PTI*

Trump to meet 'commie' Mamdani in WH

Trump said that New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani will meet him at the White House on Friday. "Communist Mayor of New York City, Zohran "Kwame" Mamdani, has asked for a meeting. We have agreed that this meeting will take place at the Oval Office on Friday. Further details to follow!" Trump said in a post on Truth Social on Wednesday. The two have clashed aggressively during Mamdani's rise to fame. —*PTI*

'Ukraine to reduce armed forces by 2.5X under US plan'

MOSCOW, 20 NOV

US President Donald Trump's peace plan on Ukraine stipulates that the country's armed forces should be reduced by 2.5 times, the Economist reporter Oliver Carroll wrote on X.

Earlier, the Financial Times said the 28-point US plan, the size of the Ukrainian armed forces is to be halved.

Earlier on Wednesday, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told TASS that Moscow had not received any information from Washington through official channels regarding the "agreements" on Ukraine reported in the media. Previously, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in response to a TASS question that Moscow and Washington are not working on any new initiatives regarding the Ukrainian settlement beyond the agreements reached by Russian President Vladimir Putin and US leader Donald Trump in Alaska.

Meanwhile, several high-ranking officials of the US Army, including Army Secretary Dan Driscoll, are in Ukraine to help with finding a permanent solution to the conflict, officials said. —*Agencies*

The Russian Foreign Ministry said that Moscow had not received any information regarding the agreement from Ukraine **PHOTO: X@DefenceU**

People evacuated en-masse from el-Fasher after the paramilitary RSF seized the city in October. Aid agencies estimate that at least 90,000 people have fled the city **PHOTO: DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS**

Will push for peace in Sudan: Trump after meeting Saudi crown prince

WASHINGTON, 20 NOV

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he plans to put greater attention on ending the brutal civil war in Sudan after being urged to take action by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Trump, who claims to have ended several wars since returning to office and has openly lobbied for the Nobel Peace Prize, admitted the conflict "wasn't on my charts" before his conversation with the Crown Prince.

Trump said he spoke in detail about the civil war with the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia during their White House talks on Tuesday.

"His majesty would like me to do something very powerful having to do with Sudan,"

- Trump, who claims to have ended several wars and has openly lobbied for the Nobel Peace Prize, admitted the conflict "wasn't on my charts."

Trump said in remarks during a joint appearance with Prince Mohammed before US and Saudi business leaders. "I thought it was just something that was crazy and out of control. But I just see how important that is to you."

Later, on Truth Social, Trump wrote that Sudan has become the "single biggest humanitarian crisis"

The RSF's recent capture of North Darfur's capital, el-Fasher, left hundreds dead and forced tens of thousands of people to flee reported atrocities by the paramilitary force.

The war between the RSF and the military has split regional powers. Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have backed the Sudanese Armed Forces, while the United Arab Emirates, a close US ally, has been sending weapons to the RSF, according to American intelligence findings.

NEARLY ALL SUDAN KIDS UNDER 5 ARE MALNOURISHED: MSF

The Doctors without Borders (MSF) said that people ate animal feed as famine spreads in Sudan. Nearly all children under the age of 5 arriving at a refugee camp in Tawila suffer from malnutrition.—*Agencies*

Imran's sisters 'assaulted' outside jail

ISLAMABAD, 20 NOV

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has condemned what it described as a "reign of terror" unleashed by the Punjab government on Imran Khan's sisters and party leaders outside Adiala Jail, calling the incident "utterly intolerable," Dawn reported.

PTI said the opposition alliance would observe a nationwide 'black day' on Friday to demand the restoration of the Constitution and the rule of law as Imran reiterated that the nation now faced a choice between "freedom and death."

Addressing the media alongside Imran's sisters Aleema Khan, Uzma Khan and Noreen Niazi and Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen Chairman Senator Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Secretary General Salman Akram Raja issued a warning. He urged those in power to abandon "reckless arrogance." —*ANI*

Death toll from Israel's Gaza strikes rises to 32

JERUSALEM, 20 NOV

A fresh wave of Israeli airstrikes in Gaza has resulted in 33 deaths, marking one of the most lethal confrontations since a US-brokered ceasefire began on October 10. Following Israeli claims of gunfire towards its troops in Khan Younis, airstrikes reportedly killed five civilians at displaced persons' tents, with hospitals in the area reporting heavy casualties, including women and children. Hamas denounced these strikes as a "shocking massacre."

Mourners pray over the body of Ruba Abu Al-Ola, killed in an Israeli strike, during her funeral in Khan Younis in Gaza Strip **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch accused Israel of potentially committing war crimes by forcibly expelling 32,000 Palestinians from West Bank refugee camps earlier this year. The report calls for investigations into Israeli officials, alleging a lack of justification for these displacements during "Operation Iron Wall."

Nadia Hardman of Human Rights Watch stated, "With global attention focused on Gaza, Israeli forces have carried out war crimes and ethnic cleansing in the West Bank." —*PTI*

META ASKS AUS TEENS TO SAVE THEIR DATA BEFORE SOCIAL MEDIA BAN

MELBOURNE, 20 NOV

Technology giant Meta on Thursday began sending thousands of young Australians a two-week warning to download their digital histories and delete their accounts from Facebook, Instagram and Threads before a world-first social media ban on accounts of children younger than 16 takes effect.

The Australian government announced two weeks ago that the three Meta platforms plus Snapchat, TikTok, X and YouTube must take reasonable steps to exclude Australian account holders younger than 16, beginning 10 December.

Meta became the first of the tech companies to outline how it will comply with the law. It contacted young account holders via SMS and email to warn that suspected children will be denied access to the platforms from 4 December. —*PTI*

CURFEW REIMPOSED

10 injured as Nepal's Gen Z clashes with Oli's party cadres

KATHMANDU, 20 NOV

Fresh tension erupted Thursday as 10 people were injured after Gen Z youths clashed with members of the ousted prime minister KP Sharma Oli's party, prompting authorities to reimpose curfew to contain the situation in Nepal's Bara district bordering India.

Tension escalated in Simara Chowk in Bara district as youths returned to the streets a day after clashing with cadres of Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML) accusing police of failing to arrest individuals named in their complaint over Wednesday's clashes, The Kathmandu Post said.

Protesters gathered at Simara Chowk from 11am. Local administration at Bara had imposed a curfew from 1pm to 8pm to prevent possible loss of life and property.

"However, the prohibitory order failed to take effect, with demonstrators pouring into the streets and clashing with police. Authorities fired six tear gas canisters and two rounds of aerial fire after protesters defied the curfew and continued advancing," news portal Khabarhub said. "Protesters also pelted stones at security forces, injuring six police personnel, while four Gen-Z protesters were also reported injured."

In a separate incident, the Gen Z demonstrators set fire to the police beat in Simara Bazaar, the news portal said.

The clashes in the district had first erupted on Wednesday, when the news of CPN-UML general secretary Shankar Pokharel and party youth leader Mahesh Basnet taking off from Kathmandu for Simara for addressing an anti-government rally spread amongst Gen Z members.

Gen Z protesters gathered at the airport to oppose their arrival, triggering the clash with local CPN-UML cadres. Authorities subsequently imposed the curfew around the airport area. —*PTI*

Gen Z protesters poured out in large numbers on the streets of Bara and clashed with the police. They also set a police beat on fire **PHOTO: KATHMANDU POST**

ITC delists from Calcutta Stock Exchange

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Diversified conglomerate ITC has announced the completion of its voluntary delisting from the Calcutta Stock Exchange Limited (CSE). In a regulatory filing, ITC confirmed that the CSE has granted approval for the delisting of its ordinary shares, effective 20 November 2025. On 30 October, ITC's board had approved the delisting under Regulations 5 and 6 of the SEBI (Delisting of Equity Shares) Regulations, 2021, subsequently notifying the CSE of its decision. CSE, established in 1908, is one of India's oldest stock exchanges. Trading activities at CSE were suspended by SEBI in April 2013 due to regulatory non-compliance. Following years of attempts to revive its operations, the exchange has opted for a voluntary exit from its stock exchange licence —*PTI*

Gold falls by ₹600 to ₹1,26,700 on dollar strength

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Gold prices fell by Rs 600 to Rs 1,26,700 per 10 grams in New Delhi on Thursday, driven by weak global trends and a robust US dollar, as reported by market experts. The 99.5 per cent purity gold decreased to Rs 1,26,100 per 10 grams, inclusive of taxes, while silver slumped by Rs 2,000, reaching Rs 1,58,000 per kilogram. Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst at HDFC Securities, stated, "Gold prices declined...due to a stronger dollar and diminished safe-haven demand following renewed US peace efforts in Ukraine." He added that the Fed's decision to maintain interest rates is expected, especially with missing labour data ahead of their meeting. —*PTI*

Rupee drops 23p, closes at 88.71 against dollar

MUMBAI, 20 NOV

The Indian rupee fell by 23 paise to close at 88.71 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, driven by the dollar's strength and diminishing prospects for a US Federal Reserve rate cut. Forex traders noted that the dollar had rallied, surpassing the 100 mark, after Fed minutes showed opposition to a December rate cut. The rupee opened at 88.63, reaching an intra-day high of 88.62 before settling lower. Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, predicted ongoing pressure from dollar demand but potential support from improved global risk appetite. The BSE Sensex surged 446.21 points, closing at 85,632.68. —*PTI*

Man Industries plans Saudi pipe plant with Aramco

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Man Industries (India) announced on Thursday that it has signed a memorandum of understanding with Aramco Asia India to explore setting up a steel pipe manufacturing facility in Saudi Arabia. The MoU takes effect immediately and will remain in force for five years. Under the agreement, both companies will assess the potential to establish a state-of-the-art plant in the Kingdom, either through Man Industries or its subsidiaries. Man Industries is one of India's leading producers of longitudinal submerged arc-welded (LSAW) pipes, spirally welded pipes and advanced coating systems. —*PTI*

TCS to invest ₹18K cr in data centres

It will tie up with equity major TGP, who will invest Rs 8,870 cr in the deal

MUMBAI, 20 NOV

The country's largest IT services company, TCS, on Thursday announced a tie-up with private equity major TPG for its upcoming data centre business. Both partners are planning to invest Rs 18,000 crore in the new venture.

TPG will invest USD 1 billion or around Rs 8,870 crore in the AI data centre business named 'Hypervault,' and will have a 27.5 to 49 per cent stake in the new business.

"Bringing in TPG as a strategic partner will help TCS give better returns to its shareholders, reduce its capital outlay, and create long-term value for the data centre platform," a statement said.

TCS had last month announced its entry into the data centre business, and plans to invest up to USD 6.5 billion to create around one GW capacity. "I am delighted to have TPG join us in our journey to build large GW-scale AI data centres in India," Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran said.

AI-data centres play a crucial role by providing infrastructure to hyperscalers and AI companies for hosting their computer hardware, high-speed storage, and low-latency networks needed to run real-time AI models ***PHOTO: PTI***

"Data centres are a multifaceted asset class and sit at the intersection of green energy infrastructure, technology and real estate," Jim Coulter, the executive Chairman of TPG and a managing partner of TPG Rise Climate, said.

TPG's investment in Hypervault is being facilitated through TPG Rise Climate and its Global South Initiative, a private equity strategy launched in partnership with ALTERRA.

The firm is also partnering through its Asia Real Estate business, marking an important milestone in India.

AI-data centres play a crucial role by providing infrastructure to hyperscalers, AI companies and businesses for hosting their computer hardware, high-speed storage, and low-latency networks needed to run real-time, large-scale AI models.

The overall capacity in India stands at 1.5 GW now and it is expected to surge to 10 GW by 2030 and the datacenters market has attracted investments of USD 94 billion, it said. —*PTI*

'ZOMATO AMONG 26 FREE OF UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICE'

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Twenty-six major e-commerce companies have self-declared that their platforms are free from "dark patterns", deceptive design tactics used to mislead or manipulate consumers, the government said on Thursday.

The Department of Consumer Affairs announced that these platforms have submitted voluntary declarations confirming compliance with the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023. Companies such as Zepto, Zomato, Swiggy, JioMart, BigBasket, Flipkart, Myntra, MakeMyTrip, Tata 1mg, Ajio, Meesho and PharmEasy are among those that have filed compliance statements.

Dark patterns are considered unfair trade practices and include tactics such as drip pricing, disguised advertisements, bait and switch, false urgency, nagging and trick wording. —*PTI*

RS 14,535 CR ACQUISITION

JP Power up 12% amid Adani takeover

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Shares of Jaiprakash Power Ventures Ltd continued their sharp upward momentum on Thursday, climbing over 12 per cent in morning trade and extending their two-day gains to more than 29 per cent.

The stock rose 12.25 per cent to Rs 22.80 on the BSE, while it advanced 12.43 per cent to Rs 22.79 on the NSE. In the previous session, it had rallied more than 15 per cent on the BSE.

The surge comes after business tycoon Gautam Adani won the approval of creditors of Jaiprakash Associates (JAL) for Adani Group's Rs 14,535-crore acquisition proposal for the bankrupt infrastructure conglomerate. Adani Enterprises, the group's flagship firm, outbid Vedanta and Dalmia Bharat, securing 89 per cent of creditor votes, followed by Dalmia Cement (Bharat) and the Vedanta Group.

The company confirmed it had received a Letter of Intent from the Resolution Professional on 19 November.

JAL, with interests spanning real estate, cement, hospitality, power, and engineering and construction, entered the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process in June last year after defaulting on loans worth Rs 57,185 crore.

Its major real estate assets include Jaypee Greens in Greater Noida, part of Jaypee Greens Wishtown in Noida, and the Jaypee International Sports City near the upcoming Jewar International Airport. It also owns commercial and industrial spaces in Delhi-NCR, five hotels across Delhi-NCR, Mussoorie and Agra, four cement plants in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and leased limestone mines in Madhya Pradesh.

The group additionally holds investments in subsidiaries such as Jaiprakash Power Ventures Ltd, Yamuna Expressway Tolling Ltd and Jaypee Infrastructure Development Ltd. —*PTI*

B'desh's HC halts Adani arbitration over dues

DHAKA, 20 NOV

Bangladesh's High Court on Thursday ordered the Adani Group not to proceed with its planned international arbitration in Singapore over a payment dispute with the state-run Power Development Board (BPDB) until an investigation into its power supply deal is completed.

A two-judge bench directed that arbitration remain suspended until a court-appointed committee completes its review of the power purchase agreement. A petition by Supreme Court lawyer Abdul Kaiyum called the deal "one-sided".

The petition argued that Adani's power tariff exceeds regional rates, noting that Indian state-owned firms charge 5.5 taka per unit, while Adani's power costs more than 14 taka per unit. Bangladesh paid 14.87 taka till 30 June 2024. —*PTI*

Mkts surge for 2nd day on firm global trends

MUMBAI, 20 NOV

The benchmark Sensex surged 446 points on Thursday, marking a second consecutive day of gains propelled by robust buying in oil and gas, and select financial stocks, alongside fresh foreign fund inflows. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed by 446.21 points, or 0.52 per cent, closing at 85,632.68. At its peak, the index soared by 615.23 points, reaching a 52-week high of 85,801.70.

Similarly, the 50-share NSE Nifty recorded a high of 26,246.65 before settling at 26,192.15, reflecting an increase of 139.50 points, or 0.54 per cent, over the previous close. Analysts attributed the rise to a rally in global markets, particularly driven by gains in technology sectors following solid earnings reports.

Notably, among the Sensex gainers were Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra, and Axis Bank, while Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Titan, and Hindustan Unilever lagged behind.

"Indian equities rose on optimism around India–US trade talks and progress on phase-1 agreements," stated Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited. "Fresh FII inflows and strength in large-cap sectors like Auto, Financials, and IT supported the upbeat trend." Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,580.72 crore on Wednesday, with domestic institutional investors (DIIs) also purchasing stocks worth Rs 1,360.27 crore. —*PTI*

TOTAL AT RS 9,000 CR

ED attaches Anil Ambani's ₹1,400 cr assets

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached fresh assets worth more than Rs 1,400 crore in its money-laundering investigation against industrialist Anil Ambani and his group companies, official sources said. With this, the cumulative value of attached properties has risen to nearly Rs 9,000 crore.

The latest provisional order, issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), covers assets in Navi Mumbai, Chennai, Pune and Bhubaneswar.

Earlier this month, the agency's Special Task Force attached more than 132 acres of land in Dhirubhai Ambani Knowledge City (DAKC) in Navi Mumbai, valued at Rs 4,462.81 crore. The investigation pertains to alleged bank fraud involving Reliance Communications Ltd (RCOM), Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd, Reliance Home Finance Ltd.

According to the ED, RCOM and its group companies availed loans from domestic and foreign lenders between 2010 and 2012, with outstanding dues accumulating to Rs 40,185 crore. Five banks have since declared the accounts fraudulent. The loans raised by one entity were allegedly diverted to repay borrowings of other group companies. —*PTI*

FUJIYAMA POWER SYSTEMS DEBUTS WITH 4% RISE

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Shares of Fujiyama Power Systems Ltd, a provider of solutions for the rooftop solar industry, began trading on Thursday at a disappointing discount of over 4 per cent from the issue price of Rs 228. The stock opened at Rs 218.40 on the BSE, a decline of 4.21 per cent, and later dropped further to Rs 215.75, reflecting a fall of 5.37 per cent .

At the NSE, it listed at Rs 220, down 3.50 per cent . The company boasts a market valuation of Rs 6,793.13 crore. Its initial public offering (IPO) of Rs 828 crore, which saw subscriptions of more than twice its offering, had a price band between Rs 216 to Rs 228. Fujiyama Power, based in Greater Noida, is known for its brands 'UTL Solar' and 'Fujiyama Solar'. —*PTI*

'Oil PSUs LPG losses at ₹53,700 cr, may get ₹30,000 cr govt subsidy'

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are grappling with significant financial pressures stemming from losses related to LPG under-recoveries, which have reached Rs 53,700 crore. A recent report by Nuvama Research reveals that the government is poised to release an LPG subsidy of Rs 30,000 crore in 12 installments over the coming months.

According to the report, "OMCs are likely to get LPG subsidy of Rs 300 billion in 12 tranches from the government versus cumulative under-recoveries of ~Rs 537 billion at end-Sep '25." The equal monthly disbursements are set to commence in November 2025 and will be recognised directly as revenue.

However, the report warns that under-recoveries are projected to rise further, particularly as regional LPG prices typically increase during the winter season. The announced subsidy only addresses approximately 56 per cent of existing cumulative losses, indicating that the financial strain on OMCs is likely to escalate even with the government's support. The LPG under-recovery occurs when the cost of sourcing or importing LPG surpasses the retail price paid by consumers. While the government's subsidy helps mitigate these losses, it remains inadequate for full compensation. —*ANI*

RECORD Q3 RESULT

Nvidia's $57B revenue calms AI bubble jitters

SAN FRANCISCO, 20 NOV

Nvidia reported blockbuster third-quarter results, easing concerns that the rapid rise in artificial intelligence valuations has outpaced fundamentals. The chipmaker posted record quarterly revenue of USD 57 billion, up 62 per cent year-on-year, beating Wall Street expectations. Net income soared to USD 31.9 billion, a 65 per cent annual increase.

The surge was driven by Nvidia's data-centre business, which generated USD 51.2 billion, up 25 per cent from the previous quarter and 66 per cent from a year earlier, reflecting intense global demand. Gaming contributed USD 4.2 billion, with the remainder coming from professional visualisation and automotive segments.

The company issued a bullish forecast, projecting USD 65 billion in revenue for the next quarter, ahead of the roughly USD 62 billion anticipated by analysts. Nvidia shares rose around 4–5 per cent after hours, with global markets also advancing as investors welcomed the stronger-than-expected numbers.

The performance helped calm speculation of an emerging "AI bubble", amid rising fears that massive investment in AI infrastructure might be overextended. Nvidia — the world's most valuable company — wields influence over Wall Street indices.

Analysts say continued profit growth is essential to justify Nvidia's valuation, particularly after its shares dropped about 10 per cent from last month's highs. The results suggest AI demand remains robust. Nvidia's stock gained over 2 per cent. —*Agencies*

NIT Rourkela gets patent for land mapping via drones

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

The National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, has secured a patent for 'BHUMANACHITRA,' an autonomous real-time land mapping drone system, officials said. The system uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to generate land maps without internet connectivity, external computers or manual interventions.

Used to identify farmlands, forests, vegetation, and urban areas, land mapping is essential for geographic governance. It serves as the basis for planning, infrastructure development, natural resource management, and environmental monitoring. In India,

land mapping relies heavily on manual surveys, which often take weeks or months. Of late, drones have been adopted. However, the captured images still need lab processing, a time-consuming process, to get a readable map

Sambit Bakshi, Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, said their deep-learning model allows the drone to recognise places in real time, he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

We are monitoring Rabada, SA bowling coach

GUWAHATI, 20 NOV

South Africa's bowling coach Piet Botha has not ruled out Kagiso Rabada's participation in the second Test against India, starting here from Saturday, despite the lead pacer's absence from training on Thursday. Rabada, one of the world's finest fast bowlers and the South African pace attack's lynchpin, missed the opening Test in Kolkata after suffering a rib injury during a training session ahead of the match. "We are monitoring Kagiso Rabada and we will take a call in the next 24 hours," Botha told reporters on the pacer's participation in the second Test.—*PTI*

India A outclasses Oman A; India B succumbs to France

MUSCAT, 20 NOV

India blanked Oman A, but India B went down against formidable France on the opening day of the team competition of the World Cup of snooker here on Thursday. Three-time IBSF champion Pankaj Advani, appearing for India A, began the demolition job in Group F with a crushing 80-4 win over Omar Sultan. Although Advani didn't come up with a big break, his rival just didn't have the wherewithal to test the Indian ace. Aditya Mehta, who was part of the team along with Advani when India last won in 2019, took his time to find his rhythm against Ahmed Alkhusaibi. Once he settled down, the Mumbaikar rifled in a frame-clinching break of 53 to put India A 2-0 up. Brijesh Damani then joined hands with Advani to defeat the pair of Sultan and Alkhusaibi 62-20 and complete the rout.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Azhar Ali resigns from PCB selection panel

KARACHI, 20 NOV

Former Pakistan captain Azhar Ali resigned from his roles in the Pakistan Cricket Board's selection committee and youth development setup on Thursday. His decision comes in the wake of Sarfaraz Ahmed being handed full control of the Pakistan Shaheens and Under-19 teams. Pakistan's former Test captain, Azhar Ali, has resigned from the national selection committee and also as the head of the youth development department at the National Cricket Academy. A reliable source close to Ali confirmed that he sent his resignation to the Pakistan Cricket Board —*PTI*

Latif questioned by Pak's NCCA on sponsorship deals

KARACHI, 20 NOV

Pakistan's former Test captain Rashid Latif has been questioned by the National Cybercrime Investigation Agency (NCCA) for alleging that sponsorship deals with betting companies dictated some of the selection calls taken by the country's cricket board. A source close to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) claimed that a complaint was filed against Rashid with the NCCA because of these allegations and not for the criticism of the team's performances."Saying that Muhammad Rizwan was removed as ODI captain because he was against surrogate advertising sponsorship deals with betting companies.—*PTI*

2nd Test: Shubman Gill set to undergo fitness test today

India's Test captain has been asked to rest up to avoid more neck spasms

GUWAHATI, 20 NOV

India's Sai Sudharsan, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Rishabh Pant during a practice session ahead of the second Test PHOTO: PTI

India captain Shubman Gill, who has not trained due to a neck spasm sustained during the first Test against South Africa, will undergo a fitness test on Friday in a last-ditch attempt to be available for the second game, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak has indicated.

Gill developed the spasm on the second day of the opening Test in Kolkata that India lost by 30 runs and hasn't returned to the nets ever since.

While his chances remain slim, the BCCI sports science team is waiting as long as possible before taking a final call. The second and final Test begins on Saturday.

Washington Sundar at No. 3: Added advantage for Team India

However, playing Sundar at number three in place of Sai Sudharsan in the Kolkata Test match looked like a natural move. Sundar's experience of batting at the top order for his state team adds value to the Indian side, particularly given the current lack of good all-rounders.

Sundar's promotion in the batting order was never a gamble. His strength with the bat comes from his experience of playing the Under-19 cricket primarily as a bowling all-rounder with a very solid grip on batting.

Playing in all formats for India is a luxury: Kuldeep Yadav

India left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav has acknowledged that playing all three formats "is a luxury," but an attacking mindset has kept him relevant in the face of stiff competition.

Kuldeep returned home from Australia mid-way through a five-match T20I series to prepare for the South Africa Tests and made a decent impact in Kolkata, taking four wickets despite the hosts losing by 30 runs. With 342 wickets across formats, Kuldeep's utility cannot be understated, and he wants to continue focusing on match fitness to remain relevant in the longest format of the game, if not all.

Everyone is blaming Gambhir: Kotak

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak said on Thursday that criticism that has been directed towards head coach Gautam Gambhir after India's defeat to South Africa in the opening Test, and he feels some of it is by people with vested interests.The 30-run defeat in Kolkata was India's fourth Test loss at home in the last year under Gambhir's stewardship. —*PTI*

IGPL MUMBAI

Pranavi creates history, beats male golfers to win

MUMBAI, 20 NOV

Pranavi Urs got the better of overnight leader Karandeep Kochhar and created history by becoming the first Indian female golfer to win a professional tournament while playing alongside male players at the IGPL Tour here on Thursday.

Pranavi carded a stunning 8-under 60, which was the week's best card, at the Par-68 Bombay Presidency Golf Club on the final day of the IGPL Invitational Mumbai.

Making her IGPL debut, Pranavi, who was trailing Kochhar by two shots overnight, played efficient and solid golf with eight birdies, the last of which appropriately came on the 18th.

She finished 14-under for the week, as against Kochhar's 64, which ended with his second eagle of the day. Kochhar totalled 12-under.

Kochhar was generous in his praise of Pranavi, saying, "I had this feeling that she would win as she was playing so well. She outplayed us all, and even early in the round, I realised I would have to play out of my skin to get the better of her."

On beating the male players, Pranavi said, "I can't describe the feeling, but right now I feel like I'm still numb and I still haven't soaked it in, that I've actually won. As for beating the boys, this is a great format and platform, and it is great to be able to play with the boys and see where your game is at with the boys. —*PTI*

WITH HUGE MARGIN

Dagar wins Deaflympics gold

TOKYO, 20 NOV

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar came up with a superb 11-under in the last round to win by a huge margin and clinch the gold medal at the Deaflympics here on Thursday.

The 24-year-old, who had represented the country at the 2017 Deaflympics when the sport was included in the event for the very first time and returned with a silver, finally took the top-podium spot at the Wakasu Golf Links thanks to her clinical putting.

The Indian had fired a four-under 68 on the opening day, the only sub-par score in a field of 21 players.

The Indian, who also qualified to represent the country at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta and a year later became only the second Indian woman golfer after Aditi Ashok to win on the Ladies European Tour at the age of 18, was on the heels of a hot putter as she shot an amazing 11-under in round two to leave the field way behind.

Indian rifle shooter Mahit Sandhu won silver in the 50m prone event with a world record in qualification for her third medal in the ongoing 25th Summer Deaflympics here on Thursday.

Mahit shot 246.1 in the finals to secure the silver medal while Eliska Svobodova of Czechia won the gold, with a score of 247.2. —*PTI*

ASHES SERIES

England desperate to end Ashes drought in Aus

PERTH, 30 OCT

The build-up to the Ashes series starting Friday began at the end of July 2023, following one of the more acrimonious test cricket series between England and Australia.

Ben Stokes and his England lineup won that test at The Oval in South London, but it wasn't enough to reclaim the Ashes from the Aussies, who won the first two tests and drew the fourth in a five-match series to retain the old urn.Cue to Perth Stadium, Day 1 of a possible 25 spanning seven weeks and five cities.

There are some big questions in play.

Can an ageing, understrength Australia continue its unbeaten run in Ashes tests on home soil that dates to the 2010-11 series?

Can Stokes inspire an end to that long drought for England?

Can Joe Root, the world's No. 1-ranked test batter, finally post an Ashes century in Australia? Can Stokes and Root win a test on Australian soil for the first time?

The Aussies

Australia captain Pat Cummins and fellow paceman Josh Hazlewood will be missing the first test because of injuries, leaving Australia's attack without half of its frontline bowlers.

I think playing all formats possible to a degree: Hazlewood

With cricket becoming a year-round pursuit, playing all formats might be taking a toll on players, but experienced

Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood feels it is possible to do the balancing act with meticulous planning and strategising.

Hazlewood, one of the most feared Australian fast bowlers, who has consistently played all formats along with Pat Cummins, recently missed the last three T20Is against England to play a Sheffield Shield game for New South Wales against Victoria to prepare for the Ashes. The 34-year-old said picking and choosing games is the right way to maintain career balance and remain refreshed for the entire season. "I think it's (playing all formats) possible to a degree. —*PTI*

WORLD BOXING CUP: MINAKSHI, ARUNDHATI, PREETI CLINCH GOLD

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Arundhati Choudhary PHOTO: PTI

Minakshi (48kg), Preeti (54kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg) and Nupur (80+kg) clinched gold medals as India's women boxers delivered a historic haul at the World Boxing Cup Finals 2025, electrifying a packed Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex in Greater Noida on Thursday.

The quartet's victories came in several key divisions that will feature at the 2028 Olympic Games, where boxing will debut full gender parity, reinforcing India's expanding competitive depth ahead of Los Angeles. Their commanding performances capped a standout campaign for the hosts, who also collected silver medals through Jadumani Singh, Pawan Bartwal, Abhinash Jamwal and Ankush Phangal, underscoring the nation's growing influence across both men's and women's Olympic-class weight categories. India's medal surge may not be over yet, with seven more boxers, including reigning World Champion Jaismine Lamboira, two-time former World Champion Nikhat Zareen, and dual World Boxing Cup medallist Hitesh Gulia, set to compete for gold in Session 7. Minakshi set the momentum early with a near-perfect 5:0 win over Farzona Fozilova. —*PTI*

FIDE WC: Arjun, Pragg likely to come back stronger

PANJIM, 20 NOV

The last two years have been most productive for Indian chess in terms of the interest the game generated, the success many players from the country enjoyed and chess finally reaching the heights wherein it has now become a full-time career sport.

The fact that there are no Indians left to fight for glory in the FIDE World Cup may have implications for Arjun or even Praggnanandhaa, but these two can only come back stronger from the current situation, with age on their side. Though it will remain unannounced till January, Praggnanandhaa will mostly make it to the Candidates, but unlike the last time, she will be the only Indian flagbearer in the premier biennial event. In the last event, D Gukesh and Vidit Gujrathi had also qualified, and the former had famously become the youngest ever world champion at a mere 18 years.

Praggnanandhaa will participate in the World Rapid and Blitz PHOTO: PTI

After that, Arjun and Praggnanandhaa will both participate in the World Rapid and Blitz, for which Carlsen is also likely to give his consent. The busy season for the Indian giants Gukesh, Arjun and Praggnanandhaa will take a temporary break only in January after the traditional Tata Steel tournament, wherein all three of them are going to participate. Nodirbek Yakubboev, could qualify from here.That can happen if the losing semifinalist from this contest wins the match for third place in the last round. In the other semifinal, Andrey Esipenko and Wei Yi will clash and given his proficiency in the faster version of the game, the Chinese GM will start as the favourite if the match is extended to a shorter version. —*PTI*

FIFA RANKINGS

Indian football team drops six places to 142nd

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

The embarrassing 0-1 defeat to Bangladesh in the 2027 Asian Cup qualifiers saw the Indian men's football team drop six places down to 142nd in the latest FIFA rankings, reflecting the national side's free fall in the last two years.

The Khalid Jamil-coached team lost to Bangladesh for the first time since 2003 in Dhaka on Tuesday, leaving the country's football fans deeply anguished at the continuous downward slide in its fortunes.

The team has already been knocked out of Asian Cup contention after losing to Singapore in Goa last month.

This was the worst ranking of the team since October 2016, when it was placed at 148th. The team has lost 40 places since December 2023, when it was ranked at 102nd. Since then, the team's ranking has been going south.

FIFA issued the rankings on Wednesday.

The Indian team is now ranked 27th among the 46 Asian countries included in the FIFA rankings, with Japan on top at 18th, followed by Iran (20th), South Korea (22nd), Australia (26th), and Uzbekistan (50th). India's best-ever ranking was 94 in February 1996. —*PTI*

Ryan gets FIFA approval, officially eligible for selection

NEW DELHI, 20 NOV

Ryan Willaims is officially eligible for selection to the Indian team as he has got FIFA approval for the change of member association after relinquishing his Australian citizenship, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Thursday. The 32-year-old Perth-born forward, who plays for Indian Super League side Bengaluru FC, has recently given up his Australian passport to become an Indian citizen."FIFA's Players' Status Chamber issued its final decision on November 19, 2025, approving the change of association request for Ryan Williams, thereby making him formally eligible to represent the Indian national team," the AIFF said in a statement."With the ruling now in effect, Ryan Williams is officially eligible for selection to the Indian national team."The AIFF said it "adhered fully to FIFA's regulatory requirements throughout the process.""Following the submission, FIFA's Players' Status Chamber reviewed the request in alignment with the standards set out in the RGAS. The Chamber delivered its decision on 19 November. —*PTI*